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LATITUDINARIANISM IN THE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY CHURCH OF ENGLAND

BY

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INTRODUCTION

This study by the late Martin Griffin, written between 1958 and 1962, was conceived as a definition of the seventeenth-century English Latitudinarians, from their origins in the thought of the Great Tew circle to the diffusion of their beliefs in the eighteenth-century Church of England. It was undertaken as a doctoral dissertation in English history at Yale University, and was directed by Professor Franklin L. Baumer, with additional assistance from Professors Roland H. Bainton, Lewis P. Curtis, Basil D. Henning, and Charles Garside, Jr. In England, where Martin Griffin conducted research at the University of London as a Fulbright fellow in 1958–59, the study was guided by Dr. Robert W. Greaves of Bedford College.

Projected both as an historical survey and as an essay in definition and analysis, the study was done at a time when very little attention had as yet been given to the individuals comprising the group here called Latitudinarian. The essay singles out the group of divines—John Tillotson (1630–94), Edward Stillingfleet (1635–99), Gilbert Burnet (1643–1715), Simon Patrick (1626–1707), Thomas Tenison (1636–1715), William Lloyd (1627–1717), Joseph Glanvill (1636–90), and John Wilkins (1614–72)—and from their writings isolates the characteristics of their thought that distinguish them from their contemporaries. These Griffin lists as: "(1) orthodoxy in the historical sense of acceptance of the contents of the traditional Christian creeds; (2) conformity to the Church of England as by law established, with its episcopal government, its Thirty-Nine Articles, and the Book of Common Prayer; (3) an advocacy of 'reason' in religion; (4) theological minimalism; (5) an Arminian scheme of justification; (6) an emphasis on practical morality above credal speculation and precision; (7) a distinctive sermon style; (8) certain connections with seventeenth-century science and the Royal Society." Next, Griffin distinguishes the Latitudinarians from the Cambridge Platonists, with whom they had many personal connections, and locates them instead within the tradition of Falkland's circle at Great Tew, tracing their conception of "moral certainty," on which they based the assurance of the truth of Christianity, to the influence of William Chillingworth. With their speculative theology they attempted to meet specifically the challenges of Hobbism, Deism, and Roman Catholic apologetics, and in both their speculative and moral theology they aimed to combat "practical atheism," emphasizing in their sermons that the chief design of Christianity was "to make men good." They also rejected the Calvinist notion of predestination, which they

thought led to antinomianism, and though they were charitable to those who differed from them in opinions, they opposed the principle of Nonconformity. "Their solution to the problem of tender consciences was comprehension, not toleration in the modern sense of the word; in the attempts of 1668, 1675, and 1689 to achieve some scheme of comprehension, the Latitudinarians therefore played prominent roles."

Since the ideas and activities of this group of churchmen included not only theology—speculative, moral, and pastoral—but also espistemology, science, literary style and theory, liturgy, the ecclesiastical polity, and politics both theoretical and practical, this study of necessity neglected some facets of their work to concentrate on basic definitions and to draw clear distinctions. The writer was himself aware of the restricted range of his inquiry, and in his prefatory note indicated that "when this thesis is made into a book, for example, the sections on the background of the Latitudinarians' conception of moral law, on their connections with Christian Humanism, and on the nature of Dissent in seventeenth-century England, must all be expanded. Unfortunately," he added, "limitations both of time and space prevented me from doing so here."

The limitation of time proved to be crucial in several respects. First, the study was finished just as there appeared a burst of scholarly work that explored the cognate subjects of scepticism and philosophic doubt in the seventeenth century. Foremost of these was the ground-breaking book of Richard H. Popkin, *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Descartes*, first published in 1960 in Holland, revised in 1964, reissued in 1968, and finally revised again and augmented in 1979, when it was published by the University of California Press. Although in his discussion of the *machine de guerre* Griffin made use of an early article by Popkin on the subject, "Scepticism and the Counter-Reformation in France," he seems not to have seen Popkin's longer definitive work on scepticism that followed upon that pioneering study. Nor in the writing of his thesis was Griffin able to make use of a relevant study of the period by one of Popkin's students, Henry Van Leeuwen, whose *The Problem of Certainty in English Thought*, published in 1963, covered precisely the same period as Griffin's study—1630 to 1690—and some of the same figures, notably Chillingworth, Tillotson, Wilkins, and Glanvill, although with quite a different emphasis (i.e., the relation of their theory of knowledge to the emergence of scientific investigation). Similarly, other scholars, some of them Popkin's students, soon turned to the period, and studies of such figures as Stillingfleet, Wilkins, Boyle, and Newton began to appear, as well as studies of such pertinent subjects as the Royal Society, the development of prose style, the emergence of the concept of probability, all of which

made the range of references on which Griffin's work had been based seem narrow.

A second limitation of time prevented the updating of the study that Griffin realized needed to be done. Soon after completing his thesis, Martin Griffin undertook decanal duties at Yale, becoming first a Residential College Dean and then Dean of Academic Affairs in the central administration of Yale College. In the midst of his administrative duties, he attempted three or four times to update his dissertation, but the pressures of his post prevented him from completing any of those efforts. He died suddenly in 1988, in the midst of another such attempt. It is a dark irony that Richard Popkin—who first read the thesis in 1982 and who then advised Griffin "to put the study in terms of our knowledge of the material today," and who continued to encourage the writer to rework it since it was "a richer presentation of the people and the issues than I have found in any of the works mentioned"—has generously agreed to do what he urged the writer to do a decade ago. In updating the study, Popkin has expanded Griffin's thesis with his own observations, amplifications, and references to publications that have appeared in the thirty years since the study's first completion. Bracketed footnotes at the bottom of the page marked "RHP" or, in one or two instances, "LF" are comments on or amplifications of the text. Bracketed footnotes similarly initialed among the notes at the end of the book update bibliographical references.

Several other kinds of effort have helped in the preparation of the thesis for publication. As editor and onetime student of early seventeenth-century English literature, I had assisted Martin Griffin in several of his attempts to update the thesis; in this last updating by Richard Popkin, I have helped primarily by checking the references in the text and by providing that layer of correction of dates and names that every thesis undergoes before publication. I have left the modernization of spelling and the changes of punctuation in the seventeenth-century quotations that Griffin introduced in his text. Finally, the painstaking work of converting the manuscript into typescript for a book has been done by Christopher Lemelin and Sandra Sablak, to whom Martin Griffin, I am sure, along with the rest of us, is eternally grateful.

Lila Freedman

PART ONE

TOWARD A DEFINITION OF "LATITUDINARIAN"

On 8 May 1660 the Convention Parliament proclaimed Charles II King of England. On 29 May he entered London, "with a triumph of above 20,000 horse and foot, brandishing their swords and shouting with inexpressible joy; the ways strewed with flowers, the bells ringing, the streets hung with tapestry, fountains running with wine."[1] In the words appointed by the Cavalier Parliament to be read forever in English churches on 29 May, the ancient constitution of Church and State had been delivered "from the unnatural rebellion, usurpation, and tyranny of ungodly and cruel men, and from the sad confusions and ruin thereupon ensuing."[2] So greatly had the Church of England suffered from the "confusions" attendant upon the Civil Wars, the Interregnum, and the Protectorate, that it had virtually become a Church Invisible. Indeed, Edward Hyde, Lord Clarendon, who had weathered the storm of exile with Charles II, probably felt that he was being no more than matter-of-fact when he said that by the Restoration, God had miraculously snatched the Church as a brand from the fire.

God had saved the Church of England, and thereby it was a Church Triumphant. But more than ever before, it was yet to be a Church Militant. The Anglican Panther in the latter part of the seventeenth century was a beast of war: her old enemies remained; new ones were at hand to join the attack upon her.

The Independent Bear, the Quaking Hare, the Baptist Boar, the Presbyterian Wolf, all had had their teeth pulled by the rigors of the Clarendon Code. But the Church of England was faced still with the problem of coming to terms somehow with the continuing existence of Protestants—about one in every twenty-three Englishmen—who dissented from her government and liturgy. Some of these were those hybrids, the Enthusiasts; though they had all the outward lineaments of men, they were yet, like Caliban, half beasts, because they had not that distinctive mark of humanity, reason, but were instead creatures of passions, humors, and shifting whims. As to Roman Catholicism, it was in one sense no new enemy; in another sense, it was. Dryden styled the Roman Church the "milk-white Hind"; from the Panther's point of view it was nothing less than the ten-horned monster of the Apocalypse. Its apologetics in the seventeenth century had taken on a new and more menacing form; worse, there were times when the Hind enjoyed the support and protection of those kingly animals, the Lion and the Unicorn. The Unitarian Fox

waxed stronger as the century advanced. And to the strength of all these was added that of that strange beast from the sea, Leviathan, who in defiance of the laws of biology, but not of logic, was closely related to Dryden's Ape—the atheist, the deist, and the freethinker.

So manifold were these enemies, so great their combined strength, that any Church would have been pressed hard to meet them. As to the Church of England, according to one contemporary historian, she would not have been equal to the task, and might have "quite lost her esteem over the nation," had it not been for the emergence of a "new set of men" amongst her clergy, called "Latitudinarians."

CHAPTER ONE

THE WORD

That contemporary historian was Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury, writing in the *History of His Own Time.*[1] Such a statement from such a man must command respect. Burnet was one of the foremost historians, statesmen, and churchmen of his day. Few were so well situated as he was to observe the important events of his time; fewer still had the understanding and learning to understand them so well as he did. No one has ever accused Burnet of impartiality, and there is no doubt that he was biased in favor of the Latitudinarians. He was, in fact, one of the few men of his time who was willing unabashedly to apply the label to himself. On the other hand, no one knew the Latitudinarians better than he did, and no one had a better right to describe them or to make any assertion for them. His statement, stripped of its conjectural elements, is that the Latitudinarians, as a group, were by far the most alert, vigilant, and perceptive defenders of the Church of England in the seventeenth century. Whether they were so important to the welfare of the Church as Burnet thought they were, is a question that must wait upon determination of who they were, and what they did.

That problem greatly interested but sometimes confused Burnet's contemporaries. "There has been a great deal of talk of late years about a certain sort of Men which they call Latitudinarians," Robert Grove, later Bishop of Chichester, wrote in 1676. "But," he continued, "I could never yet learn who they are, or what they hold, or where they dwell." Could it be, he asked, despite "all the noise, and the many pretty stories that have passed concerning them," that there are no such people?[2]

Grove's question was disingenuous, but this point was valid. By 1676 a word coined "somewhat before his Majesty's most happy return"[3] had become so comprehensive in its connotations that it must have been genuinely difficult to know what it was supposed to mean. It had been imprecise almost since its origin. In 1662 a Cantabrigian observed that so far as he could make out, a Latitudinarian was "an image of clouts, that men set up to encounter with for want of a real enemy; it is a convenient name to reproach a man that you owe a spite to; 'tis what you will, and you may affix it upon whom you will; 'tis something will serve to talk of, when other discourse fails."[4]

Yet despite the looseness of its meaning, or perhaps because of it, the word enjoyed frequent and widespread use immediately it was invented.

"I can come into no company of late," an Oxonian wrote in 1662 to a friend at Cambridge, "but I find the chief discourse to be about a certain new sect of men called Latitude-Men." "At Cambridge also," his friend replied, "the name of Latitude-Men is daily exagitated amongst us, both in taverns and pulpits, and very tragical representations made of them."[5] In a discourse between two friends published in 1670, one asked the other whether he had heard "cholerick gentlemen distinguish these persons, by a long nickname; which they have taught their tongues to pronounce as roundly, as if it were shorter than it is, by four or five syllables?" His friend answered,

> Yes, oftener, I presume, then you have: for though we are both countrymen, and wonted more than most to a solitary life; yet my occasions call me abroad, and into variety of companies, more frequently than yours do you: where I hear, ever and anon, the word of a foot and half long sounded out with a great grace; and that not only at fires and tables, but sometimes from pulpits too: nay, and it accompanied good store of other bombasts, and little witticisms, in seasoning, not long since, the stately Oxonian Theatre.[6]

"Latitudinarian," then, was a word of contempt and abuse. It was originally applied to the Cambridge Platonists. At first it was directed against their tolerant attitude toward episcopacy and their Arminian notions of justification, which conformed so little to "that hide-bound, straight-laced spirit that did then prevail"[7] in the Cambridge of the 1650s. As Burnet described them, the superintending design of the thought of the Cambridge men was moderation. "They loved the constitution of the Church, and the liturgy, and could well live under them; but they did not think it unlawful to live under another form. . . . They continued to keep a good correspondence with those who had differed from them in opinion, and allowed a great freedom both in philosophy and divinity." Because of this, they were called "men of latitude." And, Burnet continued, "upon this men of narrower thoughts and fiercer tempers fastened upon them the name of Latitudinarians."[8]

The general moderation of the Cambridge Platonists therefore speedily forced the meaning of the word to expand to include a vast number of theological issues besides those of justification and church government; and just as quickly, it was conferred also upon another group of divines who were, on the whole, a generation or so younger than the Cambridge Platonists, many of whom, according to Burnet, had been "formed under" them. Others also who shared the principles of the younger men quickly earned the title for themselves. The most representative divines of this younger set, according to Burnet, were John Tillotson (1630–94), later Archbishop of Canterbury; Edward Stillingfleet (1636–99), later Bishop of Worcester; and Simon Patrick (1626–1707), later Bishop of Ely. With them, Burnet included Thomas Tenison (1636–1715), Tillotson's

successor at Canterbury, and William Lloyd (1627–1717), successively Bishop of St. Asaph, Lichfield and Coventry, and Worcester. Burnet identified himself with this group. "These," he said, "have been the greatest divines we have had these forty years . . . I knew them well, and have lived long in great friendship with them; but most particularly with Tillotson and Lloyd." He added, "As I am sensible I owe a great deal of the consideration that has been had for me, to my being known to be their friend, so I have really learned the best part of what I know from them. But I owed them much more on the account of those excellent principles and notions, of which they were in a particular matter communicative to me."[9]

The elder men important in the formation of the ideas of the younger, Burnet identified as John Wilkins (1614–72), Bishop of Chester, and the Cambridge Platonists Benjamin Whichcote (1609–83), John Worthington (1618–71), Ralph Cudworth (1617–88), and Henry More (1614–87). The word "Latitudinarian" bears close watching in the seventeenth century. It can be seen from the years of the deaths of both sets of men that their lives overlapped in time, although Cambridge Platonism as a movement may be said to have ceased at about 1680. But inspection of the uses of the word reveals that although it sometimes referred to the Cambridge Platonists, more often, and increasingly as the century advanced, it referred rather to the persons and principles of the younger group, who were rising rapidly in the Church.

These then, according to Burnet, were some of the men called "Latitudinarians." Clearly, however, his contemporaries did not concur in his good opinion of them: from the beginning, the term "Latitudinarian," or its occasional early variant "Latitude-Man," denoted heterodoxy or religious laxity.[10] One of the most common charges, often expressed, was that "a Latitude-Man . . . being of no religion himself, is indifferent what religion others should be of."[11] The Latitudinarians, it was said, took no trouble to profess any particular religion, because they considered all religions almost equally saving. Did they not outstrip "a very heathen" in preaching that "a good life will carry men to heaven, though they be Jews, Turks, Antichristians, or never such damnable heretics in point of faith"?[12] "A Latitudinarian," Samuel Butler wrote about 1680, "believes the way to heaven is never the better for being strait."[13] Thomas Comber at about the same time in a commentary on the Prayer Book defended the anathemas of the Athanasian Creed by observing that "Latitudinarian principles were strangers to those days"[14] of the first Church Councils. And John Goodman in 1684 warned the readers of his *Old Religion* that it was "a very dangerous and absurd resolution to be of no religion, for fear we should mistake the right; it is not much

better on the other side, to be such Latitudinarians, as to think it indifferent what religion a man be of, so long as he is zealous and devout in his way, unless we could be assured, that the broad way was the way to heaven, which is most certainly false."[15]

Associated with the charge of indifference was one of scepticism. When Princess Anne wrote to James II asking him why he had become a Roman Catholic, he told her that the crucial consideration had been that of infallibility:*

> The point of the infallibility being once settled, all other controversies must needs fall. Now the Roman Church was the only Church that either has infallibility, or that pretended to it. And they who throw off this authority, did open a door to atheism and infidelity, and took people off from true devotion; and set even Christianity itself loose to all that would question it, and to Socinians and Latitudinarians who doubted of everything.[16]

What explanation could be given for the Latitudinarians' permissiveness and scepticism in religion? Their enemies did not have to look far. It was said of them, Edward Fowler observed, that they were

> a company of men that are prepared for the embracing of any religion, and to renounce or subscribe to any doctrine, rather than incur the hazard of persecution; and that they esteem him the only heretick that refuses to be of that religion the King or State professes. . . . They are characterized as people, whose only religion it is to temporize, and transform themselves into any shape for their secular interests; and that judge no doctrine so saving, as that which obliges to so complying and condescending a humour, as to become all things to all men, that so by any means they may gain something.[17]

Consequently, one of the definitions given of a Latitudinarian was that he was "a gentleman of wide swallow," meaning that "his conscience is the seat of his latitude, and that his name includes the . . . lovely character" of being a time-server and a place-seeker.[18]

Such was the charge levelled against them in 1687 by John Dryden, newly turned a Roman Catholic, in *The Hind and the Panther*. The Catholic "milk-white Hind, immortal and unchang'd," says to the Anglican Panther:

> Ah . . . how many sons have you
> Who call you mother, whom you never knew! . . .
> But most of them who that relation plead,
> Are such ungracious youths as wish you dead.
> They gape at rich revenues which you hold,

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* [The challenge presented by the argument of infallibility was not uncommon in the seventeenth century. Chillingworth became a Catholic (however briefly) because of this issue; Bayle became a Catholic for the same reason.—RHP]

> And fain would nibble at your grandame gold . . .
> They ask you blessing but for what you have,
> But once possess'd of what with care you save
> The wanton boys would piss upon your grave.
> Your sons of latitude that court your grace,
> Tho' most resembling you in form and face,
> Are far the worst of your pretended race.[19]

The moderation of the Latitudinarians in matters of Church government suggested to Dryden that they might be crypto-Presbyterians. Could it be that they were, in fact, illegitimate offspring of the Panther and the Wolf, of Canterbury and Geneva? The Hind continues,

> And, but I blush your honesty to blot,
> Pray God you prove 'em lawfully begot;
> For in some Popish libels I have read,
> The Wolf has been too busy in your bed;
> At least their hinder parts, the belly-piece,
> The paunch, and all that Scorpio claims, are his.[20]

Dryden was not alone in his assertion that the Latitudinarians' principles on the ecclesiastical polity made them but poorly-disguised Presbyterians. A dictionary published in 1699 defined "Latitudinarian" in these uncategorical terms: "a Churchman at large, one that is no slave to rubrick, canons, liturgy, or oath of canonical obedience, and in fine looks toward Lambeth, and rows to Geneva."[21] Nor was Dryden alone in speculating adversely on the parentage of the Latitudinarians. As Henry More astringently observed in 1665, "They push hard at the latitude-men as they call them, some in their pulpits call them sons of Belial, others make the Devil a Latitudinarian, which things are as pleasing to me as the reillery of a jack-pudding at one end of a dancing rope."[22]

As to their intellectual parentage, it seemed that there was little that they were not tainted with. "Truly it is to be suspected," one of their supporters complained, "they fly in the air also when they meet in their invisible coventicles, to promote their unheard-of machinations."[23] "The Papists," Burnet wrote, "set themselves against them to decry them as atheists, deists, or at best Socinians."[24] Socinianism was, in fact, a favorite charge from all sides. Sometimes it referred literally to alleged Trinitarian heterodoxy, but more often, the Latitudinarians were "suspect of Socinianism, for [they] magnify reason, and are often telling how rational a thing Christian religion is."[25] This charge, that the Latitudinarians made "Reason, Reason, Reason, their only holy Trinity,"[26] was a cherished weapon of their enemies' arsenal. An Anglican divine, John Warly, a former Fellow of Clare Hall, Cambridge, published an attack on the group in 1677, entitled, *The Reasoning Apostate: Or Modern Latitude-Man considered as He Opposeth the Authority of the King and the Church.* Warly

compared the Latitudinarians' use of reason to support Christian doctrine to the presumption of Uzzah "in supporting the tottering ark," and he accused them of "taking off from the authority of the Church, to be (as Cassian says of the secular order of men in the Roman Church) *sacerdoturientes*, a new kind of Grey-friars in the reformed religion, not pressing the authority of the church or the fathers."[27] This broadside was essentially a repetition of charges Warly had made the previous year in *The Natural Fanatick, or, Reason Consider'd in its Extravagancy in Religion*, in which he denied that natural reason was able to establish even the most elementary principles of religion, whether natural or revealed, unless it had the assistance of the authority of the divinely-guided Church, especially the Church as it had spoken through General Councils. And he asserted that the "natural fanatic" was a stranger to the notion of grace, which, he said, must be superadded to reason before the assent to the Christian revelation can be given. This charge, in fact, was most common, that the Latitudinarians tried to level "even the most mysterious" points of belief to "men's shallow capacities."[28]

As with the facts of revelation, so with its duties, the Latitudinarians were suspected of attempting to "supplant Christian religion with natural theology,"[29] to "disparage the Gospel, and make it the very same, excepting in two or three precepts, with mere natural religion."[30] Further, their doctrine of justification turned "the grace of God into a wanton notion of morality."[31] Their rejection of the doctrine of predestination gained for them the epithets of "Arminians," "Papists [or] at least Cassandrians,"[32] and made them the special object of abuse from Calvinist sectaries. The Baptist John Bunyan, for example, in rebutting Fowler's *Design of Christianity*, an exposition of Latitudinarian moral theology, called him "a brutish, beastly man," a "thief," "horribly wicked," and "an angel of darkness," and then roundly concluded, "Your book, sir, is begun in ignorance, managed with error, and ended in blasphemy."[33]

It was seldom, however, that the Latitudinarians were accused of personal immorality, though some considered that "Latitudinarianism . . . [gave] too much ease to practice, but too little to pronunciation."[34] But still, their very virtues could be held against them. One London Nonconformist minister wrote of a Latitudinarian, "That Jesus Christ has not in this nation a greater enemy; and that the goodness of his life was that which put him into a capacity of doing so much more mischief."[35]

Such were the common acceptations of the word "Latitudinarian" in the seventeenth century. Stripped of the confusing inessentials always attendant upon name-calling, the charges against the Latitudinarians can be reduced to three which reflect the main sources of contemporary alarm about their teachings. One was that they tried to make religions

too "reasonable." A second was that their doctrine of grace and their scheme of salvation were Pelagian. A third was that they were too permissive and lax in their opinions on Church government and liturgy. The basic theme of the accusations from the side of doctrinaire Calvinism was that the Latitudinarians gave too much to reason, not enough to revelation; too much to nature, not enough to grace. From High Church Anglicans and Roman Catholics came the charge that they were but Presbyterians in Anglican surplices, and that they gave insufficient importance to the doctrinal teaching authority of the Church. After the High Church schism following the Revolution, the Nonjurors bitterly complained that the Latitudinarians were conscienceless Erastians who for the sake of preferment had betrayed the divinely-constituted spiritual and sacredotal privileges of the Church of England. From all sides, for whatever reason, the quality of their Christianity was impugned by their enemies as being heretical or at best heterodox.

But all who used the word did not use it in contempt. Moderate men are usually the least vociferous, and there must have been many characterized by the temperate urbanity of the famous classicist James Duport, Master of Magdalene College and Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge, who wrote an Horation ode *In Latitudinarios*:

> Est longum et latum hoc, quod vix intelligo, nomen:
> Cudere sed voces sic juvat usque novas.
> Et qui plus dicit quam nos, hic latus habetur;
> Qui minus, angustus; nostraque sola placent.
> Cunctorum at captum pede cur metimur eodem?
> Qui mecum sentit, solus an ille sapit?
> Sumne ego Procrustes, qui distendam, atque recidam,
> Aequentur modulo ut dogmata quaeque meo?
> Hi sunt invidiae, fastus hi denique mores,
> Carbone alterius sensa notare nigro.
> Quique aliter qua nos divina oracula pandit,
> Stoicus hic forte, aut Pelagianus, erit.[36]

Name-calling may be, as Duport complained, an arrogant caprice, but there have seldom existed political or religious labels the meanings of which have not carried some connotations of approval or disapproval. "Latitudinarian" is a word like "Whig" or "Tory" and "Puritan" or "Quaker," which began as terms of contempt but survived, because they were felt to be useful, as words of description. When first invented, "Latitudinarian" was, as we have seen, a comparatively narrow label designating a certain kind of Anglican clergymen and their teachings. Usually the word carried overtones of abuse, but early there is evidence that it was also felt to have a convenient value merely as a descriptive term, as when Pepys wrote, "Dr. Wilkins, my friend, the Bishop of

Chester . . . is a mighty rising man, as being a Latitudinarian."[37] It is instructive that Burnet himself was one of the first to employ the word in a purely descriptive way. This sense by which it referred to a particular set of divines and their principles may be called its technical sense; and throughout the seventeenth century, that remained its primary meaning.

By the middle of the eighteenth century this technical sense, though still in use, had given rise to a meaning by which the word could also be applied to laymen. A standard and frequent eighteenth-century dictionary definition of "Latitudinarian" was, "one that takes too great a liberty in point of religion." Wesley's *English Dictionary* of 1753 described a Latitudinarian as "one who fancies all religions are saving"; two years later, Dr. Johnson's dictionary briefly pronounced him as "one who departs from orthodoxy." Clearly the word usually meant something disreputable, as Chesterfield indicated when he complained of "the opprobriousness and abuse of those naturally honest appellations of Freelivers, Freethinkers, Latitudinarians."[38] This sense by which the word could be used to signify a general moderation and permissiveness in religion, and to refer not just to clergymen but also to laymen, may be called its religious meaning.

Besides its technical and religious senses, "Latitudinarian" early developed another, general meaning. In this general sense, the word could mean a person of lukewarmness or laxness of any sort, whether religious or not, as when William Wycherley spoke of a "Latitudinarian in friendship," which, he said, was no friend at all.[39] In that sense, as a lexographer wrote in 1696, the word was "also vulgarly applied to such as take a more than ordinary liberty in their lives and conversations."[40] Similarly, Shelley wrote, "It is a very latitudinarian system of morality that permits its professor to employ bad means for any end whatever."[41] Usually the word used in this way also carried an opprobrious connotation; but not necessarily so, as when a dictionary defined it in 1763 as "a person not conforming to any particular opinion or standard."[42]

In the twentieth century, use of the word in any of its three senses is comparatively rare. In the middle of the nineteenth century, "Latitudinarian" fell out of style, its technical and religious meanings being expressed in common usage by the phrase "Broad Churchman."[43] Since then, the pejorative connotations which the word had almost always carried with it have virtually disappeared. If anything, the definition of the religious and general senses of the word in the *Oxford English Dictionary* probably conveys to a modern secularized society distinctly agreeable overtones of genial cosmopolitanism. As to the technical sense, it has come full circle, and is now taken to refer to a specific group of seventeenth-century Anglican divines and their teachings; by extension it

refers also to their eighteenth-century successors. It is, then, a word used primarily by historians. Historians employ the word both in its religious and in its technical senses. In its religious sense, it can be usefully applied in many periods to denote various forms of theological or ecclesiological liberalism. But one can be a latitudinarian without being a Latitudinarian. A frame of mind does not necessarily signify membership in any specific group. It would be useful if the two meanings of the word were always distinguished by the use of upper-case initial only for the technical sense. Here modern studies of the seventeenth century evince some confusion.*

We have seen that seventeenth-century usage conferred the designation in its technical sense upon the Cambridge Platonists, or (more often) upon the set of divines of which Tillotson, Stillingfleet, and Patrick were representatives, or upon both groups at once. We can easily differentiate the two groups, but the fact remains that to seventeenth-century Englishmen they were both "Latitudinarians." Even if contemporaries had distinguished more clearly between the two groups, they would not have called one of them the "Cambridge Platonists"; the term was not in use in the seventeenth century. The convention by which Whichcote, Smith, Cudworth, More, and the others are called "Cambridge Platonists" is of comparatively recent origin, and owes its popularization to John Tulloch's *Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century*, published in two volumes in 1872. In his second volume, subtitled, "The Cambridge Platonists," Tulloch made some brief allusions to Tillotson's group; to both groups, following seventeenth-century usage, he assigned the word "Latitudinarian." He observed, however—and he seems to have been the first to do so—that there were differences between them. Of the latter set, he wrote, "The type of latitude characteristic of the Revolution . . . was different from that of the Platonic School. By this time the higher philosophical inspiration of the movement had spent itself." He added, "This further aspect of the general impulse of rational thought has also its heroes, one of them, at least—Tillotson—of high wisdom and noble character."[44] He wrote nothing further about the nature of the differences he had noted, saying that such

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* [Since this study, there has been a great deal of discussion of seventeenth-century philosophical and political thought, science, theology, linguistics, language, and literature, with continuing attempts to distinguish among the meanings and significances of the term "latitudinarian." The recent work of Hugh Trevor-Roper, Christopher Hill, James Jacob, Margaret Jacob, Barbara Shapiro, Richard Ashcraft, and Hans Aarsleff are examples of the discussion of the Latitudinarians from various points of view. See footnote citations for full reference to these and other works.—RHP]

would take him beyond the scope of his purpose, which was to describe the Cambridge Platonists.

Tulloch's two volumes laid the groundwork for all subsequent investigations of rational theology in the seventeenth century; to this day its prestige remains great, though some of its conclusions have been modified.* The authority of his work, and the comparatively greater precision of the phrase he had popularized, tended to standardize the term "Cambridge Platonist" for Whichcote's set, thereby allowing the word "Latitudinarian" to take on a more exact meaning, and to settle more exclusively, by a kind of default, on Tillotson's group alone. This process can be concretely illustrated from James Bass Mullinger's history of the University of Cambridge. After a discussion of the Cambridge Platonists which was heavily indebted to Tulloch's second volume, and after quoting part of the passage from Tulloch given above, Mullinger noted that the movement declined toward the end of the century into "what was then commonly known simply as Latitudinarianism," of which he named Edward Fowler and Joseph Glanvill as characteristic exponents.[46] This historiographical convention, whereby Tillotson's group are given sole title to the word "Latitudinarian," has been followed by G.R. Cragg, the only historian who has yet considered Tillotson's group with any detail or acuteness under the aspect of "Latitudinarianism." Dr. Cragg observes that in the seventeenth century the word sometimes "refers to the Cambridge Platonists; more often it does not. Subsequently it has, by general consent, been applied to the progressive theologians of the Restoration and Revolutionary periods," that is, to Tillotson's group.[47]

This "consent" of which Dr. Cragg wrote, however, is in fact far from "general." Occasionally, though increasingly rarely, the Cambridge Platonists are still given the name. Sometimes its religious sense has been merged with its technical sense in such a way that it has been bestowed upon almost every liberal religious tendency in seventeenth-century England.[48] More specifically, it has frequently been assigned by a retroactive extension to members of Lord Falkland's circle at Great Tew,[49] even though that group had dispersed and most of the men associated with it had died before the word was invented. Because of the in-

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* [More recent interest in the Cambridge Platonists has centered on their millenarianism and on a comparison of their views with those of their younger contemporary Fellow of Trinity College, Isaac Newton. The scientific views of the Cambridge Platonists have also been recently examined, with their views taking on a greater significance as these men are seen as a group in their own right. The continuity of the Cambridge Platonists' ideas has been perceived in the work of George Berkeley, and their influence traced outside of England and into the nineteenth century.[45]—RHP]

fluence particularly of Falkland, John Hales, Henry Hammond, and William Chillingworth upon Tillotson's group, and because of similarities between the two groups in religious outlook, there is some justification for using the word for both sets of men. This is particularly the case, as will be shown, because Tillotson's group was, on the whole, closer in thought to the *convivium theologicum* of Great Tew than it was to Cambridge Platonism. Nevertheless, since all three groups are demonstrably different from each other in substantial ways, it is convenient to have a terminology that will reflect those differences. Since "Cambridge Platonist" has become a sufficiently descriptive term with well-settled meanings, there is therefore no need for a Cambridge Platonist to be a "Latitudinarian" as well as a "latitudinarian." And since the phrases "Oxford School" or "circle of Great Tew" adequately designate Falkland and his friends, it seems unnecessary that they too be "Latitudinarians" with the initial in upper-case.

Clarity and convenience; the sufficient descriptiveness of the terms referring to the Oxford and Cambridge groups; the tendency of seventeenth-century usage and a well-established though not universal convention among historians—all therefore strongly urge that the term "Latitudinarian" with an upper-case initial and without inverted commas be assigned specifically and technically to Tillotson's group alone. The practice will henceforth be followed in this essay. Such usage has an additional advantage. The Civil Wars destroyed the circle at Great Tew, and Cambridge Platonism, an isolated phenomenon, died with the Cambridge Platonists. What continued existence the ideas of the two groups had was in the thought of the Latitudinarians, who, with their successors, were the dominant element within the Church of England after the Revolution and through most of the eighteenth century. Eighteenth-century Latitudinarianism, as will be shown, could differ substantially from seventeenth-century Latitudinarianism, but the relations of the one to the other are intimate, unmistakable, and indisputable. By assigning the word in its technical sense to Tillotson's group, the fact of the continuity of Anglican tradition can be the more easily perceived and the more clearly signalized.*

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* [In 1987, a conference at the Clark Library, "Latitudinarianism, Science, and Society," attested to the ongoing interest in Latitudinarian thinkers. Some of the speakers at the conference differed sharply on the definition of Latitudinarianism, an issue that is included in the collection of some of the papers given at the conference. The volume is titled *Philosophy, Science, and Religion in England, 1640–1700*, edited by Richard Kroll (Cambridge University Press, 1991).—LF]

CHAPTER TWO

THE LATITUDINARIANS

In the *History of His Own Time*, Burnet named himself, John Wilkins, John Tillotson, Edward Stillingfleet, Simon Patrick, Thomas Tenison, and William Lloyd as Latitudinarians. To these we shall add the names of Joseph Glanvill (1636–80) and Edward Fowler (1632–1717). Glanvill is sometimes taken as standing some place between the Cambridge Platonists and the Latitudinarians, but evidence will show that he must be included among the latter. Fowler wrote the most informative contemporary defense of Latitudinarianism, and no discussion of the group would be complete without him. The lives and writings of these nine men constitute the primary basis of this study. There were, of course, other Latitudinarians, among them Robert Grove (1634–96), Bishop of Chichester; Richard Kidder (1633–1703), Bishop of Bath and Wells; John Moore (1648–1714), Bishop successively of Norwich and Ely; Gilbert Ironside (1632–1701), Bishop successively of Bristol and Hereford; and John Williams (1636–1709), Bishop of Chichester. Since none of these was so prolific in writing and controversy as any of our nine major Latitudinarians, none of them adds in any basic way to our understanding of the norm and standard of Latitudinarianism set by those nine. Consequently, they enter but peripherally into this study. At the Restoration, the average age of the nine chief Latitudinarians, excepting the forty-six-year-old Wilkins, was a little less than twenty-seven years. Burnet, the youngest, was seventeen. All of them save Wilkins, therefore, had received their educations, grown into manhood, and formed their principles during a period of religious strife unparalleled in English history. Some of them could remember the days of Charles I's personal rule, and of Laud's intransigent policy of "thorough"; they all could remember the consequences. In their most impressionable years they were exposed to the rivalries of Crown and Parliament, Episcopacy and Presbytery; to widely-scattered battles; to the King's execution; to the relentless persecution of the Church of England; to war between Presbyterians and Independents; to changing forms of political government; to the restless efflorescence of enthusiasm. They could only have been affected by these events, caused in great part by differing opinions on church government and worship; and it was in good measure because of them that they came to be "Latitudinarians."

The Latitudinarians were the third of the three great groups of religious liberals in seventeenth-century England; their debts to the teachings of the other two were large. The first of these, it has already been intimated, was the *convivium theologicum* of Lord Falkland at Great Tew, disbanded at the outbreak of civil war. The second was that of the Cambridge Platonists, which rose independently of Falkland's Oxford circle, but which shared (though sometimes for different reasons) many of the principles of Great Tew. The religious strife of seventeenth-century England elicited from both schools their characteristic teachings, which included a rational theology, a minimalism in theology, a tendency to exalt moral theology over speculative theology, and an insistence upon moderation and mutual tolerance in matters of religion and worship that were inessential. The same religious strife was the chief factor which encouraged the Latitudinarians to become disciples of both schools. Latitudinarianism differed from each of them, precisely because it was a combination of the teachings of both, and more importantly because the Latitudinarians refined and modified their intellectual heritage, and added to it, as new circumstances and problems required. The debts that the Latitudinarians owed to these two groups will be examined in detail in later pages; what is important here is that the essential equipment of Latitudinarianism was ready at hand in the late 1640s and 1650s for young men who would make use of it.

A third and distinct source of such religious liberalism was the eldest of the Latitudinarians, John Wilkins. His influence upon Lloyd and Burnet was great; upon Tillotson it was decisive. Wilkins was born in 1614 and received his boyhood training from his maternal grandfather, a Nonconformist divine; at Oxford he placed himself under the tutelage of a moderate Dissenter of Baptist tendencies; subsequently he further increased his Nonconformist connections by a tenure of five or six years as private chaplain to William Fiennes, first Viscount Saye and Seale, a radical Puritan who was a stout defender of the Parliamentary cause against Laud and Charles I. Wilkins himself, however, was fundamentally a moderate. Before the outbreak of civil war, he urged allegiance to the Crown and a peaceful settlement of disputes. But when war came, just as the moderates Falkland and Chillingworth felt obliged to declare for the King, so the moderate Wilkins felt compelled to side with Parliament.

In 1648, Wilkins received a Parliamentary appointment as Warden of Wadham College, Oxford. While he held that office, the College flourished. So notable were the geniality of his temperament and the tolerance of his opinions that he was acceptable equally to parents of all factions, Cavaliers and Roundheads, Anglicans and Puritans, who sent their sons up to Oxford to be reared under his care. Wilkins became one of the most

powerful men of the University in 1652, when Cromwell appointed him one of the five men who discharged the duties of the Chancellorship. In 1656, he increased his influence with the Protector by marrying his sister, Mrs. Robina French. According to Lloyd, so far was he from using this interest to his own advantage, that even "in the worst of times" he used it chiefly to protect his Royalist and Episcopalian friends from persecution.[1]

At the Restoration, since Wilkins's irenical spirit had made him many friends among the now-ascending Royalists, and since he found no difficulties in the Act of Uniformity, he advanced easily in preferments. Finally in 1668 he was created Bishop of Chester at the insistence of George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham. Buckingham was a sceptic or at best a Deist, but as one of Charles II's chief ministers, he was devoted, for political reasons, to the moderate religious opinions which Wilkins espoused. Wilkins's administration of his diocese was characterized by the same tolerance which had marked his university career; by interpreting leniently the requirements of conformity, he brought around many Dissenters, both clergy and laity, to the Established Church.

Like Glanvill, Wilkins had a life-long interest in experimental science and mechanics. He must have received it in the first instance from his father, a goldsmith who had an "insatiable curiosity" and who was "ingenious, and of a very mechanical head, which ran much upon the perpetual motion."[2] From its small beginnings in London in 1645, through its meetings in Wilkins's rooms at Wadham College, and after its incorporation by Charles II in 1662, Wilkins was one of the chief promoters of the ideals and activities of the Royal Society. Among his most important contributions to the scientific movement in England were disquistions on the relations between Christian doctrine and science, and by extension on the relations between revealed and natural religion. He died in 1672 at the house of John Tillotson, his son-in-law and closest friend.[3]

Tillotson owed much of his intellectual formation to his father-in-law. He was born in 1630 at Sowerby in Halifax, the son of a prosperous Congregationalist. Perhaps Tillotson's characteristic emphasis upon "reason" derived partly from his memory of his mother, whose understanding was deranged for many years of her life. Tillotson went up at the age of seventeen years to Clare Hall, Cambridge, where he put himself under the tutelage of a Puritan don, and shared quarters with two other Nonconformist youths. Letters written in 1649 to his Congregationalist minister in Sowerby show him to have been then a staunch Puritan with Independent leanings. He saw no difficulties in the Engagement against episcopacy, and he wrote that he hoped that Thomas Goodwin, the Indepen-

dent leader, might replace Ralph Cudworth as Master of Clare Hall. Tillotson received his B.A. degree in 1650, and was elected a Fellow of Clare Hall toward the end of 1651. He was in almost continuous residence at Cambridge until 1656.

Sometime between 1650 and the Restoration, Tillotson's religious outlook changed fundamentally. By character and natural inclination, he seems to have had a basic aversion to extremes of any sort; and John Beardmore, his first student, observed of him that during this period "he seemed to be an eclectic man, and not to bind himself to opinions."[4] A crucial influence on his intellectual development was *The Religion of Protestants*. "He happily fell on Chillingworth's book," said Burnet at his funeral, "which gave his mind the ply that it held ever after, and put him on a true scent."[5] Another influence, according to Burnet, was that of the Cambridge Platonists, particularly Benjamin Whichcote, who, as Tillotson himself said, during the "wild and unsettled times" of the Commonwealth and Protectorate, "contributed more to the forming of the students of that University to a sober sense of religion than any man in that age."[6] A third major factor in the formation of his opinions was his association from the end of 1656 with the London circle of Cromwell's attorney-general, Sir Edmund Prideaux, as tutor to Prideaux's son. This group was comprised of distinguished men of different political and religious persuasions, united nonetheless in friendship and mutual toleration. According to Beardmore, Tillotson at this time "improved very much"[7] by his acquaintance especially with Ralph Brownrig, the excluded Bishop of Exeter, with John Hacket, later Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, and with William Bates, a prominent Presbyterian minister. Living in this cosmopolitan household must have reinforced Tillotson's already grown conviction that no system of opinions could justly be advanced as the sole repository of truth.

"That which gave him his last finishing, was his close and long friendship with Bishop Wilkins,"[8] whom he met in London shortly after the Restoration. The friendship between the two was sealed in 1664 by Tillotson's marriage to Elizabeth French, Wilkins's step-daughter and Cromwell's niece. Tillotson cooperated in the preparation of Wilkins's massive work (660 pages folio), *An Essay toward a Real Character and a Philosophical Language* (1668), commissioned by the Royal Society as part of its drive for the reformation of language. In this book, Wilkins reduced language to 3000 symbols, the use of which he thought would be effective in advancing knowledge and eliminating religious and philosophical dissensions by the removal from communication of emotional and otherwise distracting verbal connotations.[9] After Wilkins died in 1672, Tillotson published *Of the Principles and Practices of Natural Religion*, of

which Wilkins had written only the first twelve chapters; Tillotson completed the book from Wilkins's notes. "He went into all the best things that were in that great man," Burnet said, "but so, that he perfected every one of them."[10]

Tillotson had sought episcopal ordination in 1661, and in 1662 he had submitted to the requirements of the Act of Uniformity. He soon became one of the most famous of London's preachers. His Tuesday sermons at St. Lawrence Jewry were "commonly attended by a numerous audience, brought together from the remotest parts of the metropolis, and by a great concourse of the clergy, who came thither to form their minds."[11] Of his sermons, 254 have been published, and three more survive in manuscript. So famous were they in their own day, that when Tillotson died, their sale is said to have brought the prodigious sum of 2500 guineas.[12] He became Dean of Canterbury in 1672, Dean of St. Paul's in 1689, and in 1690, he displaced the Nonjuror Sancroft as Archbishop of Canterbury. He died in 1694; William III said afterwards that he was one of the best friends he ever had.

Edward Fowler, twenty-eight years of age at the Restoration, came also from a background of Dissent. In 1662, both his father and his brother were ejected from their livings as Presbyterians; Fowler himself began his clerical career in 1656 as Presbyterian chaplain to Anabella, Dowager Countess of Kent. At first he apparently shared his family's reservations about the Act of Uniformity, for he probably did not conform to it until 1664. He received his B.A. degree from Corpus Christi College, Oxford, where he was a student from early 1650 to late 1653; from then until about 1655 he was a member of Trinity College, Cambridge. Details of his university associations and of his early intellectual formation are lacking, but they may be conjectured with some confidence from his first book, published in 1670. *The Principles and Practices of Certain Moderate Divines of the Church of England, Abusively called Latitudinarians . . . truly represented and defended . . . in a Free Discourse* was a lengthy defense and exposition of Latitudinarianism. In that book, the influence of Chillingworth and of the Cambridge Platonists is both manifest and acknowledged. The *Free Discourse* and its sequel, *The Design of Christianity* (1671), attracted the attention of Gilbert Sheldon, Archbishop of Canterbury, a former member of the circle at Great Tew, who set Fowler upon his upward career in the London *cursus honorum* by instituting him in 1673 to the living of Allhallows, Bread Street. In 1680, he published a continuation of *The Design of Christianity*, entitled *Libertas Evangelica*. These three books he intended to be taken as a whole; prolix and disorganized though they are, they comprise an invaluable primer of seventeenth-century Latitudinarianism.

As Wilkins, Tillotson, and Fowler rose in the Church, they became victims of harsh criticism because of their Nonconformist pasts. Particularly was this true of Tillotson. When he was Dean of Canterbury it was publicly inquired whether he might not be better "Dean of Bray."[13] When he became Archbishop of Canterbury, Jacobites and Nonjurors alike attacked him as an "Ecclesiastical Usurper,"[14] for was he not Father in a Church of which he had never been a son?[15] As to the "*Ne plus ultra* of a Latitudinarian conscience," one pamphleteer wrote of him, "*Non est inventus.*"[16] When graceless zealots fight, moderates will always be suspected of hypocrisy or of the lukewarmness that God spits out on Judgment Day. Wilkins had not considered the externals of church government and worship sufficient justification for war; it is in fact doubtful that he considered them sufficient justification for personal inconveniences. His two greatest concerns were for morality, public and private, and for the advancement of human knowledge; "he had a natural aversion for all idle speculations, and from the eager pursuit of small and frivolous designs."[17] Lloyd's description of Wilkins applied equally well to Tillotson and Fowler: "To be vehement, in little and unnecessary things, whether for or against them, he could not but dislike," Lloyd said, "and as his free manner was, he has often been heard to call it fanaticalness."[18] Their conformity to the Established Church came from principle, not the lack of it. This was recognized by the better men of the day, like the eminent Nonconformist Richard Baxter. In describing the kinds of men who accepted the Act of Uniformity in 1662, Baxter named among others "those called Latitudinarians . . . of Universal Principles, and free; abhorring at first the imposition of these little things, but thinking them not great enough to stick at when imposed."[19]

This was essentially the attitude also of Joseph Glanvill. Of him, Anthony à Wood observed that his sympathies had been with the Commonwealth, Protectorate, and Puritanism, but that "after his majesty's restoration, he turned about, [and] became a latitudinarian,"[20] conforming to the Church of England. This was true, but Wood's implication of tergiversation was unfair. "I never concerned myself about the disputes of church government," Glanvill said, "till the year before the King's coming in, when, upon inquiry upon the matter, my judgment voted for Episcopacy."[21] Lloyd, Tenison, Patrick, and Stillingfleet had all, in effect, also voted for episcopacy during the years 1656–59, when they separately sought out excluded bishops to be priested by them. The families of Tenison, Lloyd, and Burnet had suffered severely during the Great Rebellion for Royal and Episcopal sympathies. But whether they declared for the Church of England before the Restoration or after it, the Latitudinarians all thought that they had learned from the harsh tuition of their youth

that the best instrument for religious peace was the Church of England as by law established, with its episcopal government, its settled liturgy, and its Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion. Almost instinctively they clung to it as a source of civil stability and religious order, feeling that the only alternative was chaos.

Of all the Latitudinarians, Glanvill breathed most deeply of the air of Cambridge Platonism; he was especially devoted to Henry More. He was early an adherent of the new experimental philosophy. His student days at Oxford (1652–58) coincide with the period of Wilkins's ascendancy at the University; there is no direct evidence that Glanvill knew of the meetings of the "Invisible College" in Wilkins's rooms at Wadham College, but it would have been strange if he had not. In any event, he became one of the first fellows of the Royal Society in 1664, and much of his literary and controversial skill for the rest of his life was devoted to its advancement. His first book, published in 1661, was *The Vanity of Dogmatizing*, an attack on Aristotelian scholasticism; in 1668, he published a defense of the Royal Society entitled *Plus Ultra, or the Progress and Advancement of Knowledge since the Days of Aristotle*; and in 1671 appeared *Philosophia Pia: a Discourse of the Religious Temper of the Experimental Philosophy professed by the Royal Society*. The subject of the last book, which asserted the cooperative harmony between science and Christianity, "reason" and "faith," was perhaps Glanvill's chief concern, to which he recurred time and time again in other writings.[22] Glanvill was different from the other Latitudinarians in that he never became a member of the London Clergy; he died as Rector of the Abbey Church in Bath in 1680, aged 44.

William Lloyd, Burnet tells us, was "formed by" Wilkins.[23] Their association began at Wadham College, where Lloyd, a young M.A. of Oxford, was a tutor from 1656 to 1659. Of Wilkins, Lloyd said in preaching his funeral sermon, "What he was at his studies, I have reason to know, that have often been tired with studying with him."[24] He may well have been referring to their days at Wadham, but more probably he had in mind their collaboration in preparing the *Essay toward a Real Character and a Philosophical Language*. Their admiration was mutual: Wilkins once told Burnet that Lloyd had "the most learning in ready cash of any he knew."[25]

After the Restoration, Lloyd rose quickly in the Church and in 1680 was consecrated Bishop of St. Asaph. Perhaps his chief occupation during these years was writing and preaching against popery; and after 1685, when James II succeeded to the throne. Lloyd's attention focused more distinctly on that seventeenth-century psychological equivalent of popery, "arbitrary power." He was one of the Nine Bishops who were

imprisoned for refusing to read James's second Declaration of Indulgence in 1688. He welcomed the Revolution, and was afterwards the staunchest supporter of William III of any elevated to the Bishop's Bench before 1689. Consequently he was soon translated to the more lucrative see of Litchfield and Coventry, and in 1700 he succeeded Stillingfleet at Worcester.

Lloyd was a man of deep knowledge and of vigorous application to his interests, which were mainly historical and exegetical. It was he who commissioned Burnet's *History of the Reformation of the Church of England,* supplying him both with information and corrections. In 1684, he published *An Historical Account of Church Government, as it was in Great Britain and Ireland, when they first received the Christian Religion,* mainly to refute a theory held by some Nonconformists that early British Christianity had done without episcopacy for its first 300 years. Lloyd was famous throughout Europe for his skill in chronology, which in the seventeenth century was a discipline of the greatest importance.[26] Not only could proper chronologies demonstrate the fulfillment of Biblical prophecies precisely when they were supposed to have been fulfilled, thereby reinforcing the evidence for miracles upon which contemporary defenses of Christianity heavily depended;* but also one of the "most popular pretences of the atheists of our age [was] the irreconcilableness of the account of times in Scripture, with that of the learned and ancient heathen nations."[28] Toward the end of his life, Lloyd turned his exegetical skills more to the prophetical passages of the Bible, asserting that he could understand them as easily as the historical ones. Burnet thought that he had accurately predicted the Peace of Carlowitz in 1698, but in 1712 he informed Queen Anne that four years later there would be a war of religion in which a Protestant King of France would befriend England, and in which the Papacy would be destroyed. By then he was undoubtedly senile; he died in 1717, aged ninety.

Simon Patrick was, like Glanvill, profoundly affected by Cambridge Platonism. When a student at Queens' College, he became a fast friend and rapturous admirer of John Smith, then a young Fellow of the College. Patrick quite literally believed that his connection with Smith had been an act of divine providence.[29] Shortly after the Restoration, he became Rector of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, where he soon became noted as a great preacher; there he remained for almost thirty years until his el-

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* [The study of the fulfillment of Scriptural prophecies was a major subject connected with millenial expectations of the time. An example is William Whiston's set of Boyle Lectures, which were called "The Accomplishment of Scripture Prophecies."[27]—RHP]

evation in 1689 to the episcopate, first in the see of Chichester and then in 1691 in that of Ely. Patrick led a rigorous devotional life, and the practical piety for which he was famous was spectacularly displayed in 1665, when, unlike the majority of the London Conformist clergy, he performed his duties throughout the duration of the plague, ministering to the sick and burying the dead of his parish.[30] Patrick's collected works fill nine large volumes; besides writing numerous works of devotional and spiritual edification, he participated voluminously in contemporary polemics against Roman Catholicism and Nonconformity, and published many Biblical commentaries and Scriptural paraphrases.[31]

Another disciple of Cambridge Platonism was Thomas Tenison. As a student at Corpus Christi College, where he received his B.A. degree in 1657, he was much influenced by Ralph Cudworth, then Master.* He held a succession of country livings until 1680, when he was installed in the Rectory of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, which had been vacated by Lloyd's elevation to the see of St. Asaph. It was first offered to Patrick, who used his influence to have it bestowed on Tenison. Tenison was now in the front ranks of London clergy; St. Martin's was commonly, and on good grounds, considered to be the richest benefice in England short of a bishopric. He was a tireless parish priest, engaging himself in every sort of philanthropic activity, including the foundation of three schools in London, and the establishment for his parishioners of the city's first public library. Though James II called him a "dull man" because of the gravity and austerity of his deportment, he was noted for his preaching; that inveterate sermon-taster John Evelyn once declared that he was "one of the most profitable preachers in the Church of England."[32]

"He was a very learned man," wrote Burnet, "and took much pains to state the notions and practices of heathenish idolatry, and so to that charge on the Church of Rome."[33] It is true that most of Tenison's works published during the Restoration period were attacks on Rome. But before he became Rector of St. Martin's, Tenison had demonstrated broader philosophical interests. In 1670, he had attacked the *bête noire* of his mentor Cudworth in *The Creed of Mr. Hobbes Examin'd;* and in 1677 appeared *Baconiana or Certain Genuine Remains of Sir Francis Bacon.* This book contains a bibliography of Bacon's works, certain papers by Bacon relating to those works, comments by others on Bacon's accomplishments, together with Tenison's own rhapsodic praise of Bacon and the experimental method. After the Revolution, Tenison was consecrated

* [From 1654 on, Cudworth was Master of Christ's College; until then, he had been Master of Clare Hall.—LF]

Bishop of Lincoln, and in 1695, following Tillotson's death, he was elevated to the primatial see of Canterbury. Tillotson had recommended him to be his successor.

Burnet agreed that Tenison's appointment as Archbishop was a good one, but thought that the appointment of Edward Stillingfleet would have been better.[34] Stillingfleet was then Bishop of Worcester; Queen Mary is said to have pressed him mightily as her candidate, but he was passed over, perhaps on account of his poor health. Whatever the cause, he was worthy of the post. He was one of the most able theologians and preachers of his day; his learning was immense and his energy prodigious; his collected works fill six huge folio volumes, and range over every important issue of his day. Though it has been justly said of him that "No bishop of his day was more prominent or more famous,"[35] he has, unaccountably, been slighted by historians.[36] Of his early life and intellectual formation little is known. He was admitted to St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1649, and was in residence at the University until 1654; of any connection with Cambridge Platonism there is no certain evidence.

Stillingfleet's first two books, published before he was twenty-seven years old, were the first manifestos of seventeenth-century Latitudinarianism. The *Irenicum*, published in 1659, proposed means of reconciliation between Presbyterians and Prelatists. Its general argument can be gathered from Richard Baxter's description of one sort of clergyman who subscribed to the Act of Uniformity in 1662:

> Those that are called Conforming Presbyterians, and Latitudinarians, both say that our Prelacy is lawful, though not necessary; and that Mr. Edward Stillingfleet's *Irenicon* hath well proved, That no form of Church Government is of divine institution. And therefore when the magistrate commandeth any, he is to be obeyed.[37]

The *Origines Sacrae* was published in 1662; it was the earliest and most systematic description of the Latitudinarian theology of faith and reason. Both these books suggest the influence upon Stillingfleet of the circle of Great Tew, particularly of Chillingworth and Hammond.

In 1665, Stillingfleet became part of the London clergy, as Rector of St. Andrew's, Holborn, a living which he held until 1689, when he was created Bishop of Worcester. He was one of the most popular preachers in the city. On one occasion, Pepys, who had heard his fair share of sermons, said that Stillingfleet had preached the best one he had ever heard in his life.[38] Stillingfleet's preaching ability derived in large part from a capacious intellectual versatility. He was a good historian, particularly of British Christianity, he was learned in the law, both civil and canon, and one of the best-read men of his day in divinity and philosophy, both ancient and modern. As early as 1665, therefore, it was said of him that he

was "the ablest young man to preach the Gospel of any since the Apostles."[39]

All these Latitudinarians at the time of the Restoration were ready to meet the world and rise in it. Such was not so of Gilbert Burnet, who was but seventeen and in Scotland when Charles II landed at Dover. But he was already on his way to becoming a Latitudinarian. Burnet had early displayed the prodigious capacity of learning and work that was the hallmark of his entire life. Before he was fourteen, he was an M.A. of Marischal College in Aberdeen, having completely mastered Latin and Greek, and having competed "with applause" the ordinary university course of Aristotelian logic and philosophy. He soon settled upon a clerical career, in preparation for which he undertook a systematic study of divinity unusual both for its depth and scope. In about 1661 he was introduced to the writings of Plato, and the Cambridge Platonists John Smith and Henry More. He was particularly taken by Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, "which did so fix me that I never departed from the principles laid down by him."[40]

In 1663, Burnet, then twenty years old, made a six months' trip to England, visiting London and both universities. At Cambridge he conversed with Cudworth and More; he later said that he could never forget something that More said to him about church government and ritual: "That none of these things were so good as to make men good, nor so bad as to make men bad, but might be either good or bad according to the hand in which they fell."[41] In London he met the "moderate episcopal men, who were then called Latitudinarians":[42] Tillotson, Stillingfleet, Patrick, Lloyd, Whichcote, and Wilkins. "I grew well acquainted with Tillotson and Stillingfleet, who were then the most eminent of the young clergy," Burnet wrote, "Whitscot [sic] and Wilkins were very free with me, and I easily went into the notions of the Latitudinarians."[43] After a short term to Scotland, Burnet then travelled for some months in Europe, settling down for a time in Amsterdam, where his moderate principles were further reinforced. There, he wrote, "I knew the Arminians, the Lutherans, the Anabaptists, the Brownists, the Papists, and the Unitarians,* and I must say that I saw among them all some who were so very good that I was by this not a little confirmed in my resolutions never to go in to severe methods on the account of religion."[44] Returning to Scotland, he took priest's orders from the Bishop of Edinburgh in 1665.

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* [In a passage not included in the published versions of *A History of My Own Time*, Burnet describes his study of Hebrew and his discussions of theology with rabbis in the Jewish community of Amsterdam.—RHP]

By 1675, he was permanently in London as Chaplain to the Rolls Chapel; he preached widely in London churches, and until Charles II removed him from the list of court preacher for being "too busy" in politics, he was a chaplain-in-ordinary to the King. It was Burnet's fate, in which he delighted, to be involved to a greater or lesser degree in almost every political dispute of his time. He was without question the most prolific of the Latitudinarians, surpassing even Stillingfleet in pages written and subjects covered. His bibliography contains over 200 items: he wrote on church polity; against a large variety of Roman doctrines; on moral theology; in defense of Anglican orders; on political theory; on the Glorious Revolution; on his travels abroad; on pastoral care; on reason in religion; on the Thirty-Nine Articles; on the catechism; and he composed lives of some of his contemporaries. In addition, he wrote a two-volume *History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, published sixty of his sermons, and toward the end of his life wrote his famous *History of His Own Time*, one of the chief sources for the history of the period. William III elevated him to the bishopric of Salisbury in 1689; he died in 1715.

From these brief biographies, some general patterns emerge. In their formative days, the Latitudinarians were all exposed to one or a combination of the same liberal influences in religion. During the Restoration period, all save Glanvill were distinguished members of the London clergy; and he, as a chaplain-in-ordinary to Charles II and a Fellow of the Royal Society, frequently found himself in London. Mutual interests also drew the Latitudinarians together; they knew each other well, and associated with each other often. All of them were chaplains-in-ordinary to Charles II, a clear signal of their prominence among the London clergy, for it was from the body of court chaplains that bishops were usually appointed. Charles favored their distinctive sermon style, and whether for political or other reasons, he wished to show approval of their tolerant attitude toward Dissenters. The vicissitudes of the Great Rebellion had convinced them that the strength of the Church of England was the best safeguard of religious stability in England. Consequently, as a group, they were the most prominent anti-Catholic polemicists of their day;[45] and whatever their private relations with Nonconformists, or whatever their efforts to make the Church more comprehensive, still they were vigorous in combatting the principle of Nonconformity. In philosophy, they were on the side of the Moderns. Wilkins, Glanvill, Lloyd, Tillotson, and Burnet were Fellows of the Royal Society, and Stillingfleet and Tenison might well have been.

Finally, all of them, except Glanvill and Wilkins, who both died before the Revolution, and Lloyd, who then was already Bishop of St. Asaph, were elevated to the Episcopate by William III, along with other Latitudi-

narians. This fact is of crucial importance in the history of Latitudinarianism: although in the seventeenth century the Latitudinarians were distinctly a minority in the Anglican clergy, William III's appointments made them the dominant element within it, thus helping to pave the way for Latitudinarianism to become the prevailing motif of eighteenth-century Anglicanism.

The chief reason for the favor shown the Latitudinarians by William III was that they were, with the exception of Henry Compton, Bishop of London, who was actually one of the seven signers of the Invitation to the Prince of Orange, the most forward of all the Anglican clergy in their support of the Revolution. That, in turn, was due mainly to their deep-seated anti-Romanism. Besides being the nurse of priest-craft, superstition, and idolatry, Roman Catholicism was, in their opinion, a wicked, politically-ambitious international conspiracy dedicated to the annihilation of Protestantism by any means, however immoral. It is undeniable that an intransigent minority of English Roman Catholics advocated policies that, politically speaking, constituted treason and sedition. Naturally enough, this minority created suspicion and hatred of all Roman Catholics, most of whom, however, adhered to a policy of *quieta non movere*. That Englishmen in general during the seventeenth century could believe almost any exaggeration about Catholics is proved by the hysterical excesses of the so-called Popish Plot of 1678. Yet even for their times, the Latitudinarians were unusual in the persistence and vehemence with which they magnified the danger and extent of the Catholic political menace. Tenison's evaluation of Catholic power, given in 1683, is a fair illustration of the fears the others shared.

> The Romanists are a mighty body of men . . . all united into one common polity, and grafted into the one stock of the Papal headship. They are favoured in many places by great men; they have variety of learning; they pretend to great antiquity, to miracles, to martyrs without number, to extraordinary charity and mortification; they have the nerves of worldly power, that is, banks of money, and a large revenue: They have a scheme of policy always in readiness; there are great numbers of emissaries posted in all places for the conveying of intelligence, and the gaining of proselytes; they take upon them all shapes, and are bred to all the worldly arts of insinuation.[46]

With such an attitude, their reaction to the rule of James II can be easily predicted. James seemed intent on overthrowing the established constitution in Church and State in order to restore Roman Catholicism in England. Unconstitutionally he dispensed the penalties of the Test Act, and intruded Roman Catholics into the army, the Church, and the universities. He admitted the Jesuit Father Petre to the Privy Council and illegally opened diplomatic relations with the Court of Rome. Lending menacing

force to his Romanizing policy was the standing army he kept after Monmouth's defeat. By such actions he offered the Anglican clergy what seemed to be only two alternatives: the first was submission to the Leviathan of "popish tyranny and arbitrary power," involving the extinction of the Church of England; the other was resistance to the King in order to preserve the rights of Englishmen, particularly their right to the Protestant religion as by law established. The Latitudinarians, as a group, were the most prominent of the clergy to choose the second alternative.

The first sign of united clerical resistance to James came upon his command that his second Declaration of Indulgence be read from London pulpits on 20 May 1688. The organization and stiffening of this resistance was chiefly the work of Latitudinarians. Several meetings of about twenty of the most important of the lower clergy of London were held to determine how to meet the King's demand. At first it appeared that the clergy would submit to it, but Fowler, supported by Patrick, Tenison, Stillingfleet, and Tillotson, turned the tide, and together converted the divided group to their minority position. Having agreed that the Declaration should not be read, these clergymen divided themselves into small groups, each one going to different parts of the city to gain the concurrence of the rest of the lower clergy.[47] Armed thus with their solid support, Archbishop Sancroft drew up the famous petition of the Nine Bishops, of which Lloyd was one of the signatories.

Additionally, Lloyd, Tenison, and Patrick were early privy to the secret of the Invitation to the Prince of Orange to come to England to save the laws, religion, and property of James's subjects, and they heartily approved of it. On 7 August 1688, Tenison told Patrick to get his valuables out of London, which Patrick did, because "the Prince of Orange intended to come over with an army to our relief from the danger in which we were."[48] Lloyd seems to have been in secret correspondence on the subject with his brother-in-law, Jonathan Belgrave, chaplain to the Princess of Orange.[49] Tenison's conversation with Patrick suggests, in fact, that the imminent appearance of William at the head of the army was an open secret among the chief anti-Catholic London divines. The first three sermons of thanksgiving for his arrival which appeared in print were those of Tillotson, Patrick, and Burnet.[50]

While others waited for William's armada, Burnet was already upon it. A leisure enforced by the cordial detestation that James II bore him had prompted him in 1685 to leave England to travel on the continent. By the end of 1686 he was, by invitation of William and Mary, comfortably settled at the Hague. Before the birth of the Prince of Wales, it was generally expected that they would soon be rulers of England, for they were third and first, respectively, in order of succession to the throne. Until they

reigned, Burnet could not return to England, for James, suspecting him of sedition, placed him under a charge of high treason in 1687. Burnet wisely therefore committed himself to the interests of the Prince and Princess of Orange. He set sail as William's chaplain on the fleet that landed at Torbay on 5 November 1688, and for the next months rendered signal services to William's cause. It was he who put into final form William's Declaration that he entered England to find "proper remedies" for the abuses of the religion and liberties of James's subjects; and it was he who drew up the Association by which the rebellious peers of England bound themselves in a pact of mutual fidelity until those abuses had been righted. He published a timely *Reflections* on William's Declaration, castigating as insincere James's last-minute changes of policy and attempts at conciliation. Events moved swiftly and with unpredictable smoothness for William. On 10 December 1688, the Queen and the Prince of Wales were sent to France; James, as Burnet had advised, was allowed to follow them on 22 December. Exactly a month later, the Convention Parliament met, and by February 1689 had settled the Crown of England jointly upon William and Mary, declaring that James's flight constituted abdication.

The choice for William and against James was not so simple for the Latitudinarians to make as it might seem to be: for together with the whole host of the Restoration Anglican clergy, they had been advocates of the theory of the divine right of kings, particularly under the aspects of its corollaries of indefeasible hereditary succession and non-resistance. During the reign of Charles II, divine right seemed to provide the best theoretical protection for Church and State against the fanaticism of popery, presbytery, and enthusiasm. The Anglican clergy, everywhere and with one voice, proclaimed the doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance, declaring them to be "the badge and character of the Church of England."[51] The Latitudinarians had done the same, sometimes on unusually public occasions.[52] The fact of James II, however, was too much for the theory of divine right to support, and the Revolution relegated it to the limbo of lost causes and creeds outworn. Here, too, it was the Latitudinarians who were the most articulate of the clergy in rejecting divine right, or, what was practically the same thing, in modifying the concept so that it had no application to the case of James II. It was not, of course, that they wanted specifically to attack any of the complex of ideas that made up the doctrine of divine right monarchy. What they wanted was to provide a theoretical justification for a political reality of which they approved, the settlement of the crown on William and Mary. Hence the undercurrent of improvisation which one senses in some of their apologies for the Revolution.

Lloyd and Burnet suggested that William was legitimately king because of his possession of the crown by right of conquest.[53] They supported their case with arguments from the laws of nations and from Old Testament analogies. Fortunately, they had other weapons in the arsenal, for this idea found little favor with the political class, which had gone to considerable pains during the Convention Parliament to clothe the Revolution in the ancient and sumptuous robes of constitutional legality.[54] Both before the Revolution and afterwards, Lloyd and Burnet were also the chief propagandizers of the warming-pan myth, which held that Mary of Modena had miscarried, and that the so-called Prince of Wales was a substitution introduced into her bed in a warming-pan. This myth had been highly effective in allaying the scruples of the Princess of Orange about supporting her husband against her father; for if James had conspired to tamper with the succession, then it had been he, not others, who had violated the doctrine of divine right. Lloyd elaborated on this story until he was convinced that three substitutions of infants, not just one, had occurred during the Queen's *accouchement*.[55]

Stillingfleet's chief defense of the Revolution was grounded on a prudential consideration of the "common good," which was, he said, the fundamental basis of all political and societal obligations. James's actions against the common good, Stillingfleet asserted, had released all his subjects from obligation to him. To Nonjurors, who considered themselves still bound by their oaths to him, Stillingfleet said,

> If there be a law which makes a contract void on account of the public good, the adding of an oath to such a contract does not make it valid. . . . There is a common good of human society which mankind has an obligation to antecedent to the obligation they are under to particular persons . . . and it is agreed on all hands that an antecedent and superior obligation does void that which is subsequent and inferior when they contradict each other.[56]

In fact, he continued, the common good, as well as common sense, now required allegiance to William and Mary, who were in actual possession of royal power by consent of the three estates of the realm.

It was Burnet whose justification for the Revolution was perhaps the most sophisticated: he appealed to the contract theory of government. Eighteen months before the publication of Locke's *Treatise on Civil Government*, Burnet anticipated many of his arguments. His *Enquiry into the Measure of Submission to the Supreme Authority* (1688) was, in fact, a standard piece of Whig contractualism, and was circulated in England as pro-William propaganda several weeks before the invasion.[57] The law of nature, Burnet argued, assured men the right to life, liberty, and property. By contract, men entrusted protection of these rights to the supreme authority of a nation. Obedience to that authority was regulated by the

terms of the contract, which included the law of the land, whether prescriptive or positive. The free practice of one's religion was part of the natural right of property if the law of the land so provided, as it did in England. James II, Burnet said, had attempted a total subversion of the laws of England; since they constituted the terms of the contract by which he held regal power, he had, in effect, abdicated his crown. Consequently, since he was no longer king, it could be no violation of the doctrine of passive obedience to resist his illegal advances on the rights of his subject. Indeed, they ought to resist him, in order to preserve the law against a law-breaking king.

Such a political theory obviously involved a total rejection of divine right monarchy; Burnet went still further, explicitly to attack the doctrine's Scriptural foundations. Nothing, he said, can be taken as being divinely imposed on men, either as a belief or a duty, unless it carries with it evidence of its divine origin. Here Burnet was advancing a proposition that was, as we shall see, a characteristic Latitudinarian notion. The Scriptures, he continued, prescribed no particular form of government, nor did they clearly require assent to the doctrine of divine right. No one, therefore, could claim to rule *jure divino*, unless he could evidence miracles to attest to his right so to rule. Obviously, James could show no such warrant. But William, in Burnet's opinion, could.

"I never found a disposition to superstition in my temper," Burnet wrote, "I was rather inclined to be philosophical (i.e. to seek a natural explanation for things) upon all occasions." "Yet," he added, referring to William's voyage to England, "I must confess that this strange ordering of the winds and seasons, just to change as our affairs required it, could not but make deep impressions on me."[58] The Glorious Revolution as a miraculous feat of divine engineering was, in fact, a favorite theme of all the Latitudinarians, particularly Tillotson, Fowler, Patrick, and Lloyd. God was, after all, something of an Englishman, and it was appropriate that he should intervene in history on the English side. Were the English not "next to the Jewish nation . . . a people highly favored by God above all the nations of the earth"?[59] England was the new Jerusalem, the "glory of the Reformation, and the great bulwark and support of it,"[60] the Church of England being "the best constituted church this day in the world."[61] Hence Tillotson could say of the Revolution, "The providence of God very visibly appeared in our late deliverance; in such a manner, as I know not whether he ever did for any other nation, excepting the people of Israel."[62] Less cautiously, he wrote in his Commonplace Book on 7 June 1692 something that the other Latitudinarians must have agreed with: "I look at the King and Queen as two angels in human

shape sent down to us to pluck a whole nation out of Sodom that we may not be destroyed."[63]

The Latitudinarians as a group, then, marshalled every possible argument, whether legal, Scriptural, constitutional, prudential, or religious, in support of the Revolutionary Settlement; and while other clergymen supported the Revolution, the Latitudinarian clergy were the most forward and articulate Anglicans to do so. Obviously, William might find uses for such men, for the success of the Revolutionary Settlement depended in large measure on the quality of the support given the new monarchs by the leadership of the Established Church. Furthermore, for civil and religious stability in England, William desiderated a Church that would be as accommodating as possible to Dissenters. The Toleration Act (1689) extended freedom of worship to all but Catholics and non-Trinitarians; but besides this, William wanted a more comprehensive national Church, which would permit as many Dissenters as possible to conform to the legally-established rule and standard of English religion and worship.*

On these counts, the Latitudinarians were eminently suitable for preferment. In 1689, William appointed Burnet to Salisbury, Patrick to Chichester, and Stillingfleet to Worcester; in 1691, he appointed Fowler to Gloucester, Tenison to Lincoln, and Tillotson to Canterbury. Further rewards came in translations to more lucrative sees; Lloyd was translated to Litchfield and Coventry, and then to Worcester; Patrick to Ely; and Tenison to Canterbury. By 1691, because of the deprivation of Nonjuring Bishops or because of incumbents' deaths, William had been able to appoint sixteen of the twenty-six Bishops of the Church of England. By 1702, he had named twenty-one of them. Almost all were Latitudinarians; all but two or three were in alignment with the Latitudinarians' political outlook, which was wholeheartedly pro-William, or, as things then were, Low-Church Whig. The majority of the Anglican clergy were High-Church Tories; that is, they had a tendency to be strong against moderation or comprehension for Dissenters, and they were not, on the whole, completely convinced of the firm legality of William's title to the Crown; some of them, in fact, were Jacobites of varying degrees of fervor.

By his episcopal appointments, therefore, drawing from a group that was but a small minority of the Anglican clergy, William succeeded in welding the leadership of the Church of England firmly to the Revolutionary Settlement. If it is true that the Revolution might have failed, or

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* [The status of the Jews was not legally clarified, but tolerance toward their religious and their social and economic activities was broadened.—RHP]

might not have been bloodless, had this alliance not been accomplished, then it is equally true that the Latitudinarians, who became a majority on the Bishop's Bench during the period 1689–1702, must be given major credit for the success of the Glorious Revolution.[64]

CHAPTER THREE

SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY LATITUDINARIANISM

Burnet, with his usual directness, did not hesitate to say that he "easily went into the notions of the Latitudinarians." On the whole, however, the others were seldom eager to claim the designation. To them, such party-labels suggested sectarian factionalism, which they loathed; and they cannot have been expected joyfully to embrace a term which in current usage connoted the subversion of Christianity in general and the betrayal of the Church of England in particular. Nevertheless we have five seventeenth-century defenses or descriptions of Latitudinarianism by Latitudinarians. Our account so far has shown what contemporaries usually meant by "Latitudinarian," and it has identified the nine chief members of the group. We may now, by examining these five works, see what ideas and practices the Latitudinarians themselves advanced as "Latitudinarianism."

The contemporary defenses of Latitudinarianism are (1) S. P.'s *A Brief Account of the New Sect of Latitude-Men: Together with some Reflections upon the New Philosophy*, 1662;[1] (2) Gilbert Burnet's *A Modest and Free Conference Betwist a Conformist and a Nonconformist, about the present distempers of Scotland*, 1669; (3) Edward Fowler's *Principles and Practices of Certain Moderate Divines of the Church of England, Abusively called Latitudinarians*, 1670; (4) Joseph Glanvill's "Anti-fanatical Religion and Free Philosophy," which was the last of his seven *Essays on Several Important Subjects in Philosophy and Religion*, published in 1676; and finally, Burnet's discussion of the group in the *History of His Own Time*, with which we have already met. All these accounts agree on the essentials of the principles held by the group; in emphasis, they differ one from another because of the different purposes for which they were written.

S. P.'s pamphlet, *A Brief Account of the New Sect of Latitude-Men: Together with some Reflections upon the New Philosophy*, is in the form of a letter from S. P. of Cambridge, dated 12 June 1662, in answer to one from G. B. of Oxford, dated 15 May 1662. G. B. had inquired as to the meaning of "this mystical name, and the sect it denominates, which all of a sudden is become so formidable." For, he said, at Oxford, "tho the name be in every man's mouth, yet the explicit meaning of it, or the heresy which they hold, or the individual persons that are of it, are as unknown (for ought I can learn) as the Order of the Rosicrucians." G. B. required to know what this new group of men believed and particularly what S. P.

thought of the "new philosophy" with which they were associated. S. P.'s answer, therefore, while it covered other characteristic doctrines of the Latitudinarians, stressed their connections with the new science.

The title of Burnet's tractate, *A Modest and Free Conference Betwixt a Conformist and a Nonconformist, about the present distempers in Scotland,*[2] indicates that the chief emphasis of his work concerns the ecclesiastical polity. It is divided into six Dialogues, the first five of which expound Burnet's moderate arguments for Conformity. The sixth Dialogue specifically concerns Latitudinarianism, with which Burnet identifies his views. The religious situation in Scotland at the time was indeed "distempered." Episcopacy had been restored in 1662 against the wishes of the generality of people and clergy, whose convictions were Presbyterian; ministers who would not accept episcopal institution to their livings were ejected; and the Conventicle Act was enforced with unusual stringency. Burnet, Rector of Saltoun in East Lothian when he wrote this tract, had for six years been actively engaged in efforts at conciliation of the Episcopal and Presbyterian parties, but with signal lack of success.[3]

The most valuable seventeenth-century defense of Latitudinarianism, because of its length (348 pages) and its purpose, is Edward Fowler's *Principles and Practices of Certain Moderate Divines of the Church of England, Abusively called Latitudinarians.*[4] The book was intended for a popular audience. Fowler hoped, he wrote in the Preface, to acquaint Englishmen of all classes with the "spirit and principles" of the Latitudinarian divines, and so to prove that they did not deserve "calumnies and down-right railing" from men who consider "moderation a great crime." Consequently, he gave balanced emphasis to all the characteristic Latitudinarian doctrines. To interest as many readers as possible, Fowler cast his book into the form of a dialogue between two friends, Theophilos, "a lover of God" and Philalethes, "a lover of truth," and he gave a colloquial tone to their conversation by avoiding technical theological terms and any "curious exactness," so that the commonality for whom he wrote could follow him easily. The book was, in fact, unabashedly a piece of popular propaganda for Latitudinarian principles, which Fowler conceived were the best suited to end unchristian dissentions and enmities in religion, and bring England to the "unity of the spirit . . . in the bond of peace."

Joseph Glanvill's essay, "Anti-Fanatical Religion and Free Philosophy," was cast in the form of a continuation of Sir Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis.*[5] Bacon had not described the religion of the utopian Kingdom of Bensalem, a defect which Glanvill proposed to correct. Just as the Father of Solomon's House, that "Royal Society erected for enquiries into the works of God"[6] had informed Bacon of the state of philosophy in Ben-

salem, so now the Governor of the Strangers' House described to Glanvill the state of religion there.

Christianity, the Governor explained, was the established religion of Bensalem, having been anciently implanted there by St. Bartholomew. The Church of Bensalem had from time to time endured certain trials, and during the latest, "which happened no very long time since,"[7] there had been imported to Bensalem from an "unfortunate country" situated to the southwest a strange and pernicious form of Christianity whose adherents were called Ataxites, or Fanites.

The Ataxites were enthusiasts. Human reason they characterized in Scriptural terms as "vain philosophy," or as "wisdom of this world," or as "carnel reason," not fit to judge in spiritual things.[8] Instead, they spoke of "incomes, illuminations, communications, lights, discoveries, sealings, manifestations, and impressions" by which they could apprehend and adhere to the doctrines of Christ. They were also Puritans, asserting that they had "more purity, strictness and spirituality than other Christians."[9] They taught, the Governor said,

> That our rites and government were superstitious and anti-Christian; That we wanted pure ordinances, and gospel worship; That our good works, and Christian virtues, were nothing worth; That the best of our people were but formalists and mere moral men; That our priests were unenlightened, strangers to the power of godliness, and mysteries of religion; and that there was a necessity of a thorough godly reformation of our government, and worship.[10]

The Fanites so agitated for their principles that they broke into open rebellion against King Solomon, deposed and executed him, and threw over all the established institutions of Church and State. The period that followed was one of civil and religious chaos in Bensalem. Eventually King and Church were restored, but the confusion and havoc wrought by the sectaries had given rise during the interregnum to what some called "a new sort of divines,"[11] many of whose teachings were formed in specific opposition to those of the Fanites. Hence these new divines were often called the "Anti-fanites."

It was about this new group that the Governor proposed mainly to speak. Not, he said, that there were not other worthy and holy clergymen in the Church of Bensalem. But, he said, the Anti-fanites were "better known to me, than any others of our clergy."[12] At no point in the essay did Glanvill mention the word "Latitudinarian," but there can be no doubt that "Anti-fanite" is the equivalent. Numerous pieces of evidence point to that equivalence, and Glanvill's description of the tenets of the Anti-fanites is unmistakably an exposition of Latitudinarian doctrines. "Latitudinarian" had unattractive connotations, but a word meaning "anti-fanatic" did not, and presented Latitudinarianism to contempo-

raries under a more palatable guise. The main emphasis of Glanvill's work was epistemological; he attacked the philosophical bases of enthusiasm and sectariansim, particularly under the aspect of the predestinarian theory of grace, opposing to them the "reasonable" principles of the Latitudinarians.

Before we can examine these works further, we must briefly face again the problem raised by the seventeenth-century use of the word "Latitudinarian," in which contemporaries made no distinction between Cambridge Platonism and Latitudinarianism properly so-called. Like other contemporaries, none of these four writers made such a distinction; yet if their works are to be employed to describe the principles of the Latitudinarians as a group distinct from the Cambridge Platonists, it must first be stated that such use of them is legitimate. Fowler and Burnet are easily dealt with: both they and their writings are indisputably Latitudinarian. Glanvill's essay contains some few references which can probably apply only to Cambridge Platonists, but the essay as a whole is about Latitudinarianism. Such is particularly true of Glanvill's definitions of "reason" and "faith," wherein lay the chief and fundamental difference between the two groups, and so may be applied to either of them.

As might be expected, these defenders of Latitudinarianism show little affection for the word. "It seems," Burnet's Nonconformist observed, "you are a Latitudinarian, and I have heard much ill of these new sort of people." To this, Burnet answered,

> Truly, I own no name, but that of Jesus Christ, in which I was baptized; and these are invidious arts, to coin names of parties, and to affix them on such as disown them; I am, and desire to be a sincere Christian, but of no party or sect. But if by latitude, you mean charity, truly I must tell you, I glory in it, which is no newer way, than the new commandment which our Saviour gave to his disciples, to love one another, as he loved them.[13]

What the Latitudinarians wanted for the Church of England, Fowler said, was unity and peace, without dissension caused by the zealotry of parties and factions. Were they therefore to give themselves a name, as others uncharitably had done, they would, he said, prefer to be known as "obedient sons of the Church of England," or, better still, simply as "Christians."[14] Indeed, he added, were Christ himself now on earth, he too would "narrowly escape the reproach of the long name."[15]

They were at pains to disentangle Latitudinarianism from any imputations of heterodoxy. In quick succession, Burnet proved to his Nonconformist friend that a Latitudinarian was neither an atheist, a Socinian, a Papist, nor a Pelagian. To Burnet's assertions, the Nonconformist, only half-convinced, graciously responded, "I see that if you have any errours, you have so much legerdemain, that you are not easily discovered."[16] But

that the Latitudinarians were, in fact, faithful sons of the Church of England could be proved, S. P. said, by an examination of their opinions on the Church's liturgy, its ceremonies, its government, and its doctrine.

As to liturgy, S. P. wrote, they held as a general principle that it ought to be ordered and settled, this "having always been the practice both of the Jewish and Christian, and more or less retained by all reformed Churches."[17] The Latitudinarians thought that *ex tempore* prayers tended to have too large a component of private opinion; that they encouraged a blasphemous familiarity with God; that they had been too much used in recent years to instill "seditious and traiterous principles" in congregation; and that they provided too great a temptation for conceited men to show off their learning and rhetorical ability. "Our Latitudinarians therefore," S. P. said, "are by all means for a liturgy, and do prefer that of our own Church before all others, admiring the solemnity, gravity, and primitive simplicity of it, its freedom from affected phrases, or mixture of vain and doubtful opinions: In a word, they esteem it to be so good, that they would be loath to adventure the mending of it, for fear of marring it."[18]

Regarding ceremonies, S. P. wrote, "they do highly approve of that virtuous mediocrity, which our Church observes between the meretricious gaudiness of the Church of Rome, and the squalid sluttery of fanatic conventicles." The ceremonial of the Church of England, the Latitudinarians thought, advanced devotion by a prudent use of outward display, and so adorned the Church only "as befits an honourable and virtuous matron."[19]

The Latitudinarians, S. P. said, had a "deep veneration" for the episcopal form of church government.[20] Not, Fowler added, that episcopacy was necessarily of Dominical institution; but it did have the weighty sanctions of antiquity, convenience, and efficiency. Consequently, he said, as highly as the Latitudinarians regarded episcopacy, they did not consider non-episcopal churches to be heterodox on that count alone. In doctrine, S. P. said, the Latitudinarians were orthodox Anglicans; any suspicion that they were heretics was baseless. "They profess to dissent from none that have been held to be fundamentals of the Christian faith," Fowler said, "either by the primitive, or best reformed modern Churches."[21] As to the Church of England, the Latitudinarians "heartily subscribed to the Thirty-Nine Articles," but "taking that liberty in the interpretation of them that is allowed by the Church herself" for, he said, it was "most reasonable" to consider that the Church required assent to them as "an instrument of peace only" and not because all of them were *de fide*.[22]

The Latitudinarians were often accused of "hearkening too much to their own reason."[23] they were therefore contemptuously called the "Rational Preachers,"[24] Fowler said, by those who believed that "only faith is to be set on work in matters of religion, not reason."[25] But how, the Latitudinarians asked, could a man be a Christian *except* by his own reason? "God having created man rational," Burnet said, "the highest accomplishment of his nature, which is religion, must not be contrary, but suitable to his supreme faculty."[26] Reason, Glanvill stated, "proves some main and fundamental articles of faith, and defends all, by proving the authority of the Holy Scripture."[27] We believe the Bible, Fowler said, because it is God's word, but we believe God upon the proposition of reason that "God cannot lie."[28] Consequently, as Glanvill concluded, faith itself is "an act of reason, built upon these two reasonable principles, That there is a God; and, That what he said is true."[29] The Latitudinarians considered that man was so constituted that he could not assent to anything, whether in religion or philosophy, unless he had sufficient evidence to command belief. Reason was therefore necessarily, as S. P. said, "that faculty, whereby a man must judge of every thing"[30] and the Latitudinarians, Burnet added, insisted that the Christian religion, "both in its articles of belief, and precepts of practice, is highly congruous to the dictates of right reason. And we judge to propose them so, shall be a convincing way to commend them to all clear-witted men."[31]

An ally of reason in its affirmation and defense of religion, according to S. P. and Glanvill, must be the new science.[32] During the ferment of the Great Rebellion, he said, when all principles of certainty seemed to be called into question, the Latitudinarians, in philosophy as in divinity, sought to deliver themselves from the prejudices of custom, authority, and education, and to rely on their own reason as the only safe guide to truth. As a result, there was one charge, S. P. said, to which they proudly pleaded guilty: "That they have introduced a new philosophy."[33] Aristotelianism, he continued, was "out of request with them," and they considered that explanations of natural phenomena by "forms" and "qualities" were obfuscating when they were not actually tautological. They were atomists, and favored an experimental investigation of that marvelous contrivance of divine art, the "great automaton of the world."[34] S. P. wrote approvingly of the advances in anatomy by experiments with "those little watches . . . the bodies of animals,"[35] and of the speculations of Descartes about "that vast machine, the universe."[36] Though the Latitudinarians admired Descartes for having produced "the neatest mechanical system of things that had yet appeared in the world,"[37] Glanvill added, still they did not think that his ideas were necessarily "positive, and established truth," particularly because, as some

of them thought, his physics left too little place for the operation of divine providence.[38] In astronomy, chemistry, biology, mechanics, anatomy, and geography, the Latitudinarians thought that new knowledge and the promise of more knowledge had utterly outdated the ancients. "Why then," S. P. asked, "must philosophy alone be bound up still in its infant swaddling-bands?"[39]

Some might say that "All innovations are dangerous; philosophy and divinity are so interwoven by the Schoolmen, that it cannot be safe to separate them; new philosophy will bring in new divinity, and freedom in the one will make men desire a liberty in the other."[40] But such a notion, S. P. said, was ridiculous, for "true philosophy can never hurt sound divinity."[41] And, he added, a new wind was in the air: "There is an infinite desire of knowledge broken forth in the world; and men may as well hope to stop the tide, or bind the ocean with chains, as hinder free philosophy from overflowing: It will be as easy to satisfy men's corporal appetites with chaff and straw, as the desires of their minds with empty words and terms."[42]

Was this new spirit not something, he asked, that the Church of England must take account of? How otherwise could the clergy keep the respect of the gentry "who begin generally to be acquainted with the atomical hypothesis"?[43] How else could the clergy answer those who were attacking religion with this hypothesis, if they did not themselves put it to vigorous use in support of religion? But if Christianity were to be liberated from the shackles of Aristotelian scholasticism, and if the Church of England were to embrace the new mechanical philosophy, then indeed she would be well-armed to combat atheism, enthusiasm, and superstition. "Let not the Church," S. P. concluded, "send out her soldiers armed with dockleaves and bulrushes, to encounter swords and guns; but let them wear as good brass and steel as their enemies, and fight with them at their own weapons; and then having truth and right on their side, let them never despair of victory."[44]

The use of reason in religion, Fowler said, led the Latitudinarians to a "very remarkable moderation" in points of religious controversy. Truth, he observed, was usually found someplace between two extreme opinions, and the Latitudinarians "have not (as has been too general a practice) endeavoured to run as far from their adversaries as possibly they could; but carefully observing what truth may be found in their opinions, and heedfully separating it from what they conceive erroneous in them, they have . . . steered a middle course."[45] They were careful to preserve a distinction between doctrines which were essential for salvation, and those which were not. As Glanvill said, the Latitudinarians held as "one of their main doctrines" that "the principles which are necessary for sal-

vation are very few, and very plain, and generally acknowledged among Christians."[46] The Bible alone was a sufficient rule of faith, for in it the few fundamentals of religion were set forth, Fowler said, even to the meanest intelligence, with "such perspicuity and clearness, that nothing but men's shutting their eyes against the light can keep them from discerning their true meaning."[47] The Latitudinarians were, however, "not at all forward," Fowler wrote, in offering the world a "Catalogue of Fundamentals."* Instead, they told their congregations that "it is sufficient for any man's salvation, that he assent to the truth of the Holy Scriptures, that he carefully endeavor to understand their true meaning, so far as concerns his own duty, and to order his life accordingly."[49] But in effect, according to Glanvill, the fundamentals of belief might ultimately be resolved into the doctrines contained in "the first comprehensive, plain creeds."[50]

All Christians, if they used their reason properly, might be certain of these fundamental and essential doctrines; but no man or group of men, the Latitudinarians said, had any monopoly on truth in non-fundamental doctrines. No one, they said, was infallible, and the "wisest and best of men, (and even) Churches"[51] had no guarantee against error in extra-essentials. Such fallibility, Fowler wrote, must be attributed to the Apostolic Church, to the Church Fathers, to Church Councils, including the four first great Councils, to the Church of England itself. Consequently, Glanvill said, the Latitudinarians rested their assent in divinity upon the clear evidences of Scripture and reason, accepting the judgment of antiquity or authority as probable only when those evidences appeared equal on both sides of a question. Others, they thought, ought to have the same liberty: for one Christian to call another a heretic for his opinions in extra-essentials was, Fowler said, "a piece of tyranny."[52] Certainly such dogmatizing was unreasonable and unchristian; what was worse, it produced civil disturbances, wars, persecutions, and every sort of offense against charity. "Let us," Fowler pleaded, "not magisterially impose upon one another, and be so charitable as to believe well of Dissenters

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* [There had been a serious effort to find a catalogue of fundamentals or harmony of confessions to unite all Christian churches. Foremost in this endeavor was John Dury, who devoted his long life, both on the Continent and in England, to the advocacy of the reunion of Christian churches. Dury married an aunt of Lady Ranelagh and Robert Boyle; his daughter married Henry Oldenburg, the first secretary of the Royal Society. Despite his early service to the monarchy as tutor to the royal children, at the Restoration he was removed from his office as library keeper of St. James, a position he had held through the decade of the Commonwealth. When he returned to the Continent in 1661 to continue his proseltyzing among the German Protestant courts, he was forbidden to reenter England.[48]—RHP]

from us that live good lives, are of a modest and peaceable deportment, and hold no opinions, that directly oppose the design of the Christian religion."[53] These Latitudinarian principles, Fowler, said, if only they were universally acted upon, would bring religious concord to England and to the whole Protestant world; further, they "will unshackle, and disentangle men's minds and give them their due liberty; they will enlarge and widen their souls, and make them in an excellent and most commendable sense, men of latitude."[54]

The moderation that the Latitudinarians exhibited in matters of religious opinion, Fowler wrote, they showed also in matters of Church discipline. Ecclesiastical government and church rituals they considered to be "things alterable, and in their own nature indifferent."[55] The Scriptures, Burnet told his Nonconformist friend, commanded no specific form of church government, but only that "there should be Church officers, that those should be separate for that function, that they should be obeyed, that things should be done, edification, and peace." The ecclesiastical polity, he added, "being a half civil matter, needs not divine warrants," and might therefore be adjusted by civil authority to the state and alteration of things. Because the forms of church government and worship were matters indifferent to salvation, all Christians might and should submit to the dispositions of the law of the land concerning them. That, said Burnet, "is so rational, that I can see nothing to be excepted against it, with any shew of colour or reason."[56] Indeed, opposition to the government and ritual of the Established Church was nothing less than superstition, for as Burnet said, "he . . . that judges a thing of itself indifferent, to be necessary: and he that condemns it as unlawful, are equally superstitious."[57] But the Latitudinarians were nonetheless eager, Fowler said, that indulgence be shown to those whose tender consciences would not permit them to conform to the commands of authority "in some things disputable." They would, he wrote, be glad if the Established Church would submit to such alterations in forms of worship and discipline as would satisfy moderate, reasonable, and charitable Nonconformists. They would wish, in fact that there were "nothing" in the constitution of the Church in matters indifferent that would give offense to such men.[58]

The Latitudinarians, according to Fowler, had "another name given them besides the long one, and that of Rational Preachers: namely, Moral Preachers."[59] Morality, both public and private, was indeed one of their chief concerns. They thought, Fowler said, that "the grand design of the Gospel is to make men good: not to intoxicate their brains with notions, or furnish their heads with a system of opinions; but to reform men's lives, and purify their natures."[60] S. P. observed that some would like to

become "men of longitude" by increasing the Thirty-Nine Articles to 39,000, but he thought that such zealots had completely missed the point of Christianity: "For my own part," he said, "I shall always think him the most conscientious who leads the most unblamable life, though he be not greatly scrupulous about the externals of religion."[61] Consequently, the major theme of the Latitudinarians' sermons was on doing good. "In their discourses generally," Fowler said, "they handled those subjects that are of weightiest and most necessary importance: I mean such as have the greatest influence into the reformation of men's lives, and the purification of their souls."[62] And they practiced what they preached: they were "not only not scandalous, but very lovely also in their behavior, and greatly obliging."[63]

The sermons of the "Rational" and "Moral Preachers" had a distinctive style; Burnet said that they contributed "more than can be well imagined" to reform seventeenth-century English preaching style.[64] Before their time, the most popular preachers, according to Glanvill, were "those that dealt most in jingles, and chiming of words, in metaphors, and vulgar similitudes, in fanatic phrases, and fanciful schemes of speech."[65] But the Latitudinarians thought that fancy and metaphor were no road to truth; if a man was to profit from a sermon, it must speak to his intellect and reason. "These persons," Fowler wrote, "look upon no preaching as truly powerful, but that which works upon the affections by first conquering the judgment; and convinces men of their duty by solid reasons and arguments, and excites them thereunto by persuasive motives."[66] They preached in a clear and plain way, sticking to their Scriptural text without beclouding its meaning with gratuitous learning, and explaining "the nature and reasons of things so fully, and with that simplicity, that their hearers felt an instruction of another sort than had commonly been observed before."[67] They avoided speculative or controversial subjects, concentrating rather on expounding the practical duties of a Christian man. Consequently, many criticized them as "men of dry reason, and void of God's spirit," as if, Fowler said scornfully, "to be a spiritual preacher, were to be an irrational one."[68] The first prominence of their mode of preaching was due to Charles II, whose "true taste" prompted him to accord it royal encouragement by appointing Latitudinarians as court chaplains.[69] But later, according to Burnet, it became popular in its own right, and many other clergymen adopted it. By their preaching, their principles, and their practices, Burnet concluded, the Latitudinarians "brought off the city in great measure from the prejudices they had formerly had to the Church."[70]

CHAPTER FOUR

"LATITUDINARIANISM" DEFINED

The most striking fact emerging from a comparison of these five contemporary accounts of seventeenth-century Latitudinarianism is their remarkable accord with one another. From them we learn that the Latitudinarians professed to be orthodox Christians and conformable Anglican divines; that they advocated a "reasonable" religion; that they had the same doctrine of justification; that they were theological minimalists; that they held the same attitude toward church government and worship; that they thought personal morality was more important than theological exactitude; and that they countenanced a liberty of opinion in matters "extraessential," so long as the peace of the Church was maintained.* Two of the five expositions of Latitudinarianism described the adherence of the group to the "new philosophy."

No one of these positions, of course, was unique to the Latitudinarians; no one of them, taken separately, would usefully differentiate a Latitudinarian as such from any of his contemporaries. It is, however, the *combination*, steady and almost without exception, of all these characteristics taken together, that provides a basis by which the norms and standard of seventeenth-century Latitudinarianism may be distinguished.

It has been said of the seventeenth-century Latitudinarians that "the boundaries of the group are ill-defined."[2] If one's criterion of definition is the norm and standard represented by the combination of characteristic Latitudinarian doctrines, then such a statement can be denied, whether it be taken to mean that the outlines of Latitudinarian principles are hazy, or that, supposing we have sufficient information about a seventeenth-century figure, the identification of him as a Latitudinarian must to a great degree be a matter of conjecture. In a sense, however, such a statement is true. There were many contemporaries who either (1) professed all these doctrines, but gave them a content different from Latitudinarianism; or (2) professed some but not all, or all but one, of these doctrines. The chief examples of the first type were, of course, the Cambridge Platonists; care must therefore be taken in subsequent chapters to show precisely how they differed from the Latitudinarians.

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* [Trevor-Roper has pointed out that this view derives from Hugo Grotius and Gerard Vossius, the first generation of Dutch Arminians, who had an immediate impact on the views of the members of the Great Tew circle, and through them a continuing influence on the English Church.[1]—RHP]

A man could be a Latitudinarian in some things, but not in others. Thomas Sprat, Bishop of Rochester, and historian of the Royal Society, for example, was a Latitudinarian except for his ecclesiology. In that respect, he was a High Churchman, while the Latitudinarians were Low Churchmen.[3] The term "High Churchman" appeared in the last decade of the seventeenth century, followed almost immediately by its opposite, "Low Churchman." Both labels were generally used at first as terms of abuse.[4] High Churchmen held what Burnet termed "exaggerated" views of the quality and extent of the authority of Church and Episcopate, and of the nature of the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist. Since they tended to believe non-episcopal churches to be heretical, they naturally wanted the Church of England to have a minimum of traffic with Presbyterians and other Dissenters. Since they tended toward a Catholic sacramental system, they favored more elaborate rituals and ceremonies than the Latitudinarians did, and were unwilling to alter the rubrics of Anglican worship to accommodate Calvinist tastes. In ecclesiology and liturgy, "Low Church" and "Latitudinarian" for our period were equivalent terms. As it was pellucidly demonstrated during meetings of Convocation in 1689 and again in 1701, the great majority of Anglican divines were more or less High Churchmen; only a minority of the lower clergy found itself in agreement with William III's predominantly Latitudinarian and Low Church Episcopate.[5]

Though all Latitudinarians were Low Churchmen, not all Low Churchmen were full-fledged Latitudinarians.[6] John Hall (1633–1710), for example, who was William III's Bishop of Bristol from 1691, was Low Church, but his theory of grace was staunchly Calvinist, and he did not share the Latitudinarian theology of faith and reason. "Low Church" and "Whig" are closely associated terms, but though the Latitudinarians on the whole held what may be called the Whig conception of the constitution, "Whig" and "Latitudinarian" are obviously not interchangeable equivalents, despite the close connections, particularly in the eighteenth century, between Latitudinarianism and Whiggism. In temperament and disposition, Lord Halifax's Trimmers and the Latitudinarians were remarkably similar, and it did not escape contemporaries that what the Latitudinarians were to the Church the Trimmers were to the State.[7] But although it appears from Halifax's definition that a Trimmer must be a Latitudinarian of sorts,[8] none of our Latitudinarians seem to have been political Trimmers save in the general sense that the "character of a Trimmer" included a spirit of charitable moderation, and in the sense that all who approved the Revolution Settlement were more or less Trimmers.[9]

The circles of Latitudinarianism and of the new science intersected but did not coalesce. Wilkins and Glanvill were actually *virtuosi*; the other Latitudinarians were but more or less interested observers of the advancement of natural knowledge. The group as a whole was less concerned with science *per se* than with the uses to which science might be put as a hammer against infidels. Then again, while most of the *virtuosi* were, like the Latitudinarians, advocates of reason and religion, some were not: for example, Sir Thomas Browne, though a *virtuoso*, was something of a semi-mystic and a fideist, and John Wallis was a conservative Calvinist. The spiritual founder of the Royal Society himself, in fact, provides a classic example of the seventeenth-century fideism. In short, though both *virtuosi* and Latitudinarians were adherents of the new philosophy, the fact that some Latitudinarians were *virtuosi* as well was accidental rather than essential to their Latitudinarianism.*

This norm and standard as a test of full-fledged seventeenth-century Latitudinarianism need not be applied so rigidly as to deny the classification "Latitudinarian" to all who did not hold every characteristic Latitudinarian doctrine. In fact, that standard can lend added precision to the word's meaning in any context. Hence there can be no objection to calling such men as Sprat or Hall "Latitudinarians," so long as it is recognized and stated that in their different ways, they deviated from that conjunction of doctrines characteristic of standard Latitudinarianism. Sprat, for example, might be described as "a Latitudinarian whose ecclesiology was different from that of any other members of the group"; or Hall could be termed "a Latitudinarian in ecclesiology, but not in theology." At first blush, it might seem that the use of this standard demands more evidence from the past than the past in many cases actually affords; for we must know a good deal about a man's ideas and actions before we can, in full certainty, accord him the status of a full-fledged Latitudinarian. But the problem of insufficient evidence will be the constant plague of the historian until some means is found by which the dead may be raised in order to assist in the task of categorizing themselves. What this touchstone of standard seventeenth-century Latitudinarianism does is not to demand evidence that is unavailable; rather, it enables more precise evaluation of evidence that is available, by putting it into a proper perspective. Hence of such men as John Hough

* [The religious impetus of the Royal Society has been debated over the last decade. Some see the Royal Society as the outgrowth of a millenarian vision, others as a more practical, social, and less religious undertaking. Webster and Popkin are among the first, and James and Margaret Jacob among the second. The role of Robert Boyle as scientist and religious thinker, relevant to this ongoing debate, is still being unravelled; the task is complicated by the fact that a great many of his papers are not yet published.—RHP]

(1651–1743), Bishop of Worcester, Nicholas Stratford (1633–1707), Bishop of Chester, and Humphrey Humphries (1648–1712), Bishop successively of Bangor and Hereford, it may be said that they were definitely Latitudinarian in ecclesiology, but that there is no evidence as to where they stood on other characteristic Latitudinarian principles. For them, then, "Low Churchmen" is an indisputably accurate designation, "Latitudinarian" but a probable one.

Use of the norm and standard of seventeenth-century Latitudinarianism is especially useful in distinguishing it from the Latitudinarianism of the eighteenth century, and also in differentiating it from those rational movements with which it almost imperceptibly merged toward at the end of the seventeenth century—Deism, Socinianism, Arianism, Unitarianism. What set seventeenth-century Latitudinarianism apart from those movements was its characteristic of "orthodoxy," together with the logically-related characteristic of conformity to the Church's requirements of clerical subscription of the Thirty-Nine Articles.*

Now "orthodoxy" is a comparative term; moreover, the standards for it in the Church of England have always been sufficiently imprecise to permit subscription of the Articles of Religion by men who entertained a wide variety of opinions. But it is possible to define orthodoxy in an historical sense, rather than in a confessional or theological one. On the whole, throughout the history of Christian doctrine, Christian theologians have exhibited a tenacity for adherence to certain beliefs which they have considered to be among the irreducible *minima* of orthodoxy. Among such doctrines are those of the Trinity, Original Sin, the Deity of Christ, and the Resurrection. The *meaning* of these doctrines has varied from time to time, but to dispute the *fact* of them at any time has been to place oneself outside the mainstream of Christian orthodoxy.

In this historical sense, orthodoxy was genuinely a hallmark of the norm and standard of seventeenth-century Latitudinarianism. But it was not, however, of the Latitudinarianism of the eighteenth century, which could and did shelter heterodoxy, such as that of the "Latitudinarian traditours," Richard Watson,† Bishop of Llandaff, and Benjamin Hoadly, successively Bishop of Bangor, Hereford, Salisbury, and Winchester.[10] Both denied the authority of any Church to require confessions of ortho-

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* [Nonetheless a constant charge of Deism and Socinianism has been laid against those here called Latitudinarians. Even present-day scholars are not entirely certain of the beliefs of this group of men. Reading Burnet's exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles can make one suspicious about his actual subscription to all of them, especially Article 1.—RHP]

† [Richard Watson wrote the most important answer of the time to Paine's *Age of Reason* in his "Apology for the Bible . . . Letters . . . to Thomas Paine," (1796). —RHP]

doxy from clergy or laity, or more specifically, of the Church of England to require subscription of the Thirty-Nine Articles. Hoadly flirted with Arianism, and Watson flatly denied that the Athanasian doctrine of the Trinity was "either in any passage of Holy Writ, or can by sound criticism be deduced from it."[11] William Wake (1657–1737), Archbishop of Canterbury, himself of moderate divinity, considered that clerics like Samuel Clarke and William Whiston, Hoadly and Watson, had carried the principles of latitude to the point of "libertinism."* To his friend, Professor Jean Alphonse Turrettini of Geneva, Wake wrote in February 1718:

> There is another event that does great harm to all those who sincerely pursue peace without the prejudice of any necessary truth. It has fallen out that a set of Latitudinarian writers (who call themselves free-thinkers) have made it their business for some time past to write down all confessions of faith, all subscriptions of any articles of religion whatsoever, as contrary to that subjection we owe to Christ as our king. These men are some of them Deists; some Socinians; a better sort Arians; all of them are enemies to the Catholic Faith, in more or less of the most fundamental articles of it. They are not content with an universal toleration, but would be admitted to offices and dignities in the established church without subscribing the Articles or so much as approving the liturgy of it.[13]

That Deists, Socinians, and Arians could be found under the protective wings of eighteenth-century Latitudinarianism was, as will later be shown, both a signal and a result of the breakdown of the seventeenth-century Latitudinarian system of faith and reason. For it was precisely the distinction of the Latitudinarianism of that century that it combined orthodoxy with a thorough-going rationalism. This combination was both tenuous and short-lived, and, as we shall see, it began to deteriorate at about 1690. Not until its disintegration, however, did Latitudinarianism shelter heterodoxy.[14] It is probably more accurate, therefore, and certainly more convenient, to date the beginnings of "eighteenth-century Latitudinarianism" at about 1690 than it is to include heterodoxy under the aspect of seventeenth-century Latitudinarianism. Using this distinction, then, such men as John Locke, Samuel Clarke, William Whiston, who held heterodox ideas on the Trinity, must be considered atypical seventeenth-century Latitudinarians, but were unexceptionable ones of the eighteenth century. By then, of course, the word "Latitudinarian" had begun to deserve the imputations of heterodoxy with which it had usually been associated in common usage.

Was that what that hardy old champion of King and Church, Sir Philip Warwick, had feared? In his *Memoires*, after lamenting the growth of par-

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* [In 1710 Whiston's Arian denial of the Thirty-Nine Articles both in print and sermon led to his being dismissed as Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge.[12]—RHP]

ties within the Church before the Civil Wars, and their fatal differences over trivia and the most difficult and speculative points of theology, he said of the years in which he was writing (1675–7), "These reflections make me heartily sorry, that we have a new word of distinction come up amongst us, *viz.* Latitudinarian." There might be bad consequences for the Church, he said, if Latitudinarianism were not carefully expounded "by those good and learned men, to whom it is assigned." "For," he added "this too often falls out, that in future ages those, that take up the title, retain not the moderation of the first assertors."[15]

PART TWO

FAITH AND REASON : A SYSTEM FOR THE TIMES

"The universal disposition of this age is bent upon a rational religion,"[1] Thomas Sprat wrote in his *History of the Royal Society*, published in 1667. The Church of England, he added, "cannot make war against reason, without undermining our own strength, seeing it is the constant weapon we ought to employ."[2] Reason, then, was to be a weapon in war; but against what foes? Sprat specifically named "implicit faith" and "enthusiasm" as chief enemies of the Church of England, but there were others, foes not just of Anglicanism, but of Christianity itself.

"It is a vicious world that we live in, and always . . . so much unbelief,"[3] Lloyd said mournfully in a sermon delivered before Charles II in 1667. Five years earlier, Stillingfleet had published his *Origines Sacrae* as a preservative against "the large spread of atheism among us."[4] When he died, he was preparing a new edition of the book in further answer to the "too great prevalency of scepticism and infidelity in [our age]."[5] In 1696, he observed how "common a theme among the sceptics" it had become to profess natural religion, and to express "a mean esteem of the Scriptures and the Christian religion."[6] Atheism and Deism were not confined only to the educated: "To scorn and despise religion," John Scott said in 1689 at the consecration of Stillingfleet, Patrick, and Ironside, "is now no longer the prerogative of wits and gallants; but the infection is spread and propagated into shops and stalls, and even among the rabble there are apostles of atheism."[7]

"Atheism" was a word loosely used in the seventeenth century. Often it meant the "practical atheist," or profligate. "Speculative atheism" could mean two things, according to Stillingfleet: either ideas "as have a tendency toward atheism," or ideas which were "plainly atheistical." Notions with a tendency toward atheism were those that weakened "the known and generally received proofs of God and providence" by attributing "too much to the mechanical powers of matter and motion."[8] In Stillingfleet's opinion, for example, Cartesianism showed such a tendency by its bifurcation of the spiritual from the material world, and by the tendency of Descartes's followers to assert his ontological proof for God's existence to the exclusion of what Stillingfleet thought was the more certain cosmological proof.[9] When "plainly atheistical" ideas were challenged in seventeenth-century England, the target was sometimes

the pantheism of Spinoza, but was almost always Hobbesian materialism.[10]

Charles II once compared Thomas Hobbes to a bear against whom the Church played her young dogs to give them exercise: literally thousands of sermons were preached during the Restoration period against Hobbes specifically; to these must be added thousands more against the philosophy of Epicurus and Lucretius, who provided the closest classical parallel to Hobbism. Hobbes was, in fact, a neo-Epicurean; he asserted that God and the human soul were not pure spirits, but fine matter; that the soul was mortal; that the universe had come about by a chance concourse of atoms, and that it was governed by rigidly mechanical laws which left no room for divine providence. As for religion, Hobbes's *Leviathan*, published in 1651, declared that its first rise had been in "perpetual fear, always accompanying mankind in the ignorance of causes";[11] it had been institutionalized and perpetuated by rulers to awe their subjects into obedience. Hobbism enjoyed a certain vogue during the Restoration period, but apparently a comparatively short-lived one. Not long after the Revolution, Stillingfleet could congratulate himself that the menace of outright atheism seemed pretty much to have disappeared; if there were many atheists, no longer did "they think it . . . for their reputation to own it."

"The main pretence now," Stillingfleet continued, "is against revealed religion."[12] He was here referring to Deists, who, because they were not Christians, could also classify as a kind of "atheist." Before the 1690s, Deism did not seem to be a problem of great magnitude, though Stillingfleet's *Letter to a Deist* in 1675* complained about the increase of those whose beliefs halted with natural religion. But John Toland's *Christianity Not Mysterious*, published in 1696, touched off a bitter controversy which revealed the hitherto unsuspected strength and numbers of those who, like Anthony Collins, William Woolston, Matthew Tindal and Toland himself, regarded natural and revealed religion not as allies but as options. Deism had originated in England with Lord Herbert of Cherbury's *De Veritate*, published in 1625.[13] The expanded geographical horizons of seventeenth-century Europe had brought Christians into increased contact with alien religions, and had prompted many of them to consider what objective evidence existed for the claims of Christianity to be the only true religion with an exclusive monopoly on salvation. Some, like Lord Herbert, concluded that Christianity, like Buddhism or Confucianism, was but a particular variant of natural religion, the contents of which were the universal rational principles which he called "common

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* [Dated June 11, 1675 but published in 1677.—LF]

notions." These common notions were that there is a God with providential attributes, that he ought to be worshipped, that good should be done and evil repented, and that there was an afterlife of rewards and punishments.

The prestige of the new science greatly enhanced the prestige of natural religion. Seventeenth-century scientists viewed Christianity and science as allies: by uncovering the secrets of nature, the *virtuosi* thought that they were providing concrete evidences of God's existence and of his providential attributes of wisdom, goodness, and power, thus firmly grounding Christianity in the rational and unshakeable foundation of natural religion. But the effect of developments in astronomy, physics, biology, medicine, and chemistry was steadily to reduce the role of divine providence in a universe which operated, it was increasingly seen, by natural mechanical laws. As the order of providence and miracles retreated before the order of nature and law, Christianity, which was the most miraculous example of providential intervention in nature, required more and more explanation to square it with the findings and assumptions of the mechanical philosophy. And though seventeenth-century scientists, with almost religious fervor, attempted to demonstrate the agreement of science and Christianity, the cumulative effect of their arguments was steadily to reduce the supernatural elements of Christianity. By the end of the century, revelation found itself so much accommodated to natural religion that the theologies of Locke and Newton, though they believed themselves to be good Christians, looked a good deal like Deism. Technically, of course, Locke was not a full-fledged Deist, but the uses to which his disciple Toland* put his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and his *Reasonableness of Christianity* initiated the Deist Controversy of the turn of the century.[14]

Like the *virtuosi*, the Latitudinarians were no enemies to natural religion; they were indeed its greatest exponents among the Anglican clergy. By a "rational religion," in fact, they meant one based on natural religion. "All reasonings about Divine revelations must necessarily be governed by the principles of natural religion," Tillotson said, "that is, by those apprehensions which men naturally have of the divine perfections, and by the clear notions of good and evil which are imprinted upon our natures."[15] In the affirmation of natural religion, they thought, lay their chief weapon against Hobbism. But in their scheme, natural religion was a proof and buttress of revelation; their entire "rational religion" was therefore, either implicitly or explicitly, a confutation of those who might

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* [Actually, Toland was no genuine disciple. However much he presented himself in that light, he was disowned by Locke during the controversy engendered by the publication of *Christianity Not Mysterious* (1696).—RHP]

make natural religion not the foundation of Christianity, but an alternative to it.

The Latitudinarians' defenses of Anglican orthodoxy against these various "atheisms" were many. Stillingfleet's *Letter to a Deist* (1675) and his *Origines Sacrae* (1662) have been mentioned. A comparison of the titles of the two editions of *Origines Sacrae* instructs us in Stillingfleet's awareness of the growth of unbelief during his lifetime. The 1662 edition was subtitled, *A Rational Account of the Christian Faith, as to the Truth and Divine Authority of the Scriptures;* the second edition was to be subtitled, *A Rational Account of the Grounds of Natural and Revealed Religion: Wherein the Foundations of Religion, and the Authority of the Scriptures, are Asserted and Cleared, With an Answer to the Modern Objections of Atheists and Deists.* The latter was to have five books; Stillingfleet completed only one and a half of the four chapters that were to comprise Book I. Tillotson's first and longest sermon, "The Wisdom of Being Religious" (1664), was directed against atheism in general and against Hobbes in particular. His series of nine sermons (CLXXX to CLXXXIII) on the evidences of the truth of the Christian religion, together with his eight sermons (CLXV to CLXXIII) on the nature of "faith," were intended as preservatives against unbelief. Wilkins's *Principles and Practices of Natural Religion* (1672) was written "in opposition to that humor of scepticism and infidelity which has of late so much abounded in the world." To the same purpose were Tenison's *Creed of Mr. Hobbes Examin'd* (1670), and his *Sermon concerning the Folly of Atheism* (1691), as well as Glanvill's "The Usefulness of Real Philosophy to Religion" and "The Agreement of Reason and Religion," the fourth and fifth of his *Essays on Several Important Subjects in Philosophy and Religion* (1672). Of the same nature was Glanvill's *Seasonable Recommendation and Defence of Reason, in the Affairs of Religion* (1670). His *Lux Orientalis* (1662), and his *Saducismus Triumphatus* (1681) were intended as blows against Hobbesian materialism, affirming the reality of a spiritual world as proved by the existence of witches and evil spirits. Patrick published a translation in 1680 of Grotius's *De Veritate Religionis Christianae*, hoping, he said in the Dedication, that his effort might "have some effect for the reclaiming those that are irreligious; or the settling those who are wavering or doubtful." To the same purpose was his lengthy *Witnesses of Christianity* (1675–77). The first two of Burnet's *Four Discourses Delivered to the Diocese of Sarum* (1694) were on "The Truth of the Christian Religion" and "The Divinity and Death of Christ"; he wrote them, he said, because "in this age in which we live, the laughing at every thing that is resolved into a mystery, passes for a piece of wit, and has the character of a free and inquisitive mind."[16]

In all these works, the Latitudinarians were also, at least indirectly, opposing those other enemies of Anglicanism mentioned by Sprat, "implicit faith" and "enthusiasm." A standard seventeenth-century definition of "enthusiasm" was that given in Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Enthusiasts, Locke said, "flattered themselves with a persuasion of an immediate intercourse with the Deity, and frequent communications from the Divine Spirit." He added,

> Their minds being thus prepared, whatever groundless opinion comes to settle itself strongly upon their fancies, is an illumination from the Spirit of God, and presently of divine authority: and whatever odd action they find in themselves a strong inclination to do, that impulse is concluded to be a call or direction from heaven, and must be obeyed: it is a commission from above, and they cannot err in executing it.[17*]

Pretences to such forms of knowledge the Latitudinarians viewed as evidence of mental derangement, an arrogant manifestation of intellectual distemper, "the power of a strong fancy, working upon violent affections."[18] During the period of the Great Rebellion, scores of groups such as the Muggletonians, the Fifth Monarchy Men, the Diggers, and the Levellers, many of them bizarre in their beliefs, had multiplied and flourished; during the Restoration period, Quakers were the most prominent of those denominated "enthusiasts."[19]

Closely connected with "enthusiasm" in the minds of the Latitudinarians were other forms of irrationality, "fanaticism" and "superstition." "By fanaticism we understand," Stillingfleet wrote, "either an enthusiastic way of religion; or resisting authority, under a pretence of religion."[20] Resisting authority could mean armed rebellion, but it could also mean preaching without a license or stubborn Nonconformity. Fanaticism was also, as Wilkins understood it, an inordinate estimation of trivia and nonessentials in religion. Thus it was similar to "superstition," which Glanvill defined as "going on opinions, as fundamentals of faith; and idolizing the little models of fancy, for divine institutions."[21] By this definition, both Nonconformists and Roman Catholics were "superstitious." Enthusiasm, fanaticism, and superstition were all "unreasonable" in epistemology and conclusions, and were thereby, the Latitudinarians thought, a grave menace to Anglicanism and Christianity. Rigid insistence on the validity of religious opinions which could not be proved by rational evidences was, they said, the cause of sectarianism and factionalism, which subverted the peace and unity of the Church of England. Sects and factions, in turn, with their confident assertions of conflicting

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* [An earlier work that became standard was Henry More's *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus* (1656), which not only gives the characteristics of the mental attitude called "enthusiasm" but also lays out its dangers to religion.—RHP]

truths, called all religious truth into doubt. As Sprat said, "The infinite pretences to inspiration and immediate communication with God that have abounded in this age have carried several men of wit so far as to reject the whole matter, who would not have been so exorbitant if the others had kept within more moderate bounds."[22]

By "implicit faith," Sprat and the Latitudinarians meant the resolution by Roman Catholics of religious certainty into the authority or infallibility of the Church. Ultimately, Stillingfleet said, implicit faith "must be carried to enthusiasm," because in the final analysis it involved a kind of fideism which gave assent to religious propositions for which there was insufficient rational evidence.[23] When all is said and done, the vast controversies between Catholics and Anglicans in seventeenth-century England resolved themselves into an epistemological debate concerning the nature and contents of religious certainty. In their debates with Protestants, both French and English Catholics usually adopted a line of attack which was uncharacteristic of traditional Catholic apologetics either before or since. "Now that the main principle of religion was struck at by Hobbes and his followers," Burnet wrote, "the papists acted upon this a very strange part."

> They went in so far even into the argument for atheism, as to publish many books in which they affirmed, that there was no certain proof of the Christian religion, unless we took it from the authority of the church as infallible. This was such a delivering of the cause to them, that it raised in all good men a very high indignation at popery; that party [Burnet here refers to the Latitudinarians] showing, that they chose to make men who would not turn papists become atheists, rather than to believe Christianity upon other ground than infallibility.[24]

As far as he went, Burnet described accurately enough the tactics of the dominant form of Catholic apologetics in Restoration England. It had been formulated in France by followers of Montaigne, notably the Jesuit François Veron (1575–1625), who had constructed what he called the "*machine de guerre de nouvelle invention*," an engine of war which he said would produce a "quick victory" over Protestants.[25*] The *machine de guerre* operated by two stages; the first stage was a Pyrrhonist destruction of the Bible as an adequate ground for Christian belief; the second stage, which allowed of variable maneuvers, was an assertion of Roman Catholicism variously on a basis of fideism, or of infallible authority or tradition. In France, the *machine de guerre* usually took the form of Mon-

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* [It may be of interest that Veron taught at La Flèche when Descartes was a student there. He later became the scourge of French Protestant theologians, debating them in Paris. The discussion of his views and theirs appears in some of the controversialist literature in England during the mid-century.—RHP]

taigne's marriage of Pyrrhonism in philosophy with fideism in religion. In England, it was usually constructed of scepticism about the Bible as a rule of faith, combined, however, with a thoroughly rational defense of the Church's tradition or authority as infallible guides to salvation. Protestants, the English Romanists said, used the Bible as the standard and source of their beliefs. But as a rule of faith the Bible was defective, not only in itself, but also because logically it required something outside it to certify its truth. Such certification could come only from the authority or tradition of the Roman Church. Unless, therefore, one was to become a fanatic or an enthusiast, there was rationally no other alternative to Deism (or worse) than the certainty provided by the infallibility of the Church of Rome.

Ever since the Thomistic synthesis in medieval theology, the standard practice among Catholic theologians had been to accord to human reason a high place in the attainment of the certitude of faith. Such is now still the case, more particularly since Leo XIII and Pius XI established the writings of Thomas Aquinas as the norm of Catholic speculative theology. Though the *machine de guerre* at first enjoyed applause from some of the highest quarters in the Roman Church, it soon revealed itself as a double-edged sword. If Pyrrhonism was to be allied with fideism, then there was no standard whatsoever by which to judge the contents of "faith." While theoretically the first stage of the *machine de guerre* invalidated the Bible as a basis of Protestant certainty, the second stage was completely unequipped to establish the truth of Catholic certainty. The same was true of the English form of the *machine de guerre.* Every sceptical argument advanced against the Bible was equally valid against authority or infallible tradition, so that no matter how "rationally" tradition or authority was proposed, adherence to Roman Catholicism finally had to come to pure fideism. The *machine de guerre* was deployed in Europe from about the end of the Council of Trent to the end of the seventeenth century;[26] in the long run it contributed prodigiously to the growth of European unbelief, but in the short run it achieved some spectacular successes. In England, for example, its chief converts were Charles II, James II, and Dryden.

The first important uses of the *machine de guerre* in England occurred in the first half of the seventeenth century in two almost simultaneous encounters between Anglicans and Jesuits. The first was the famous conference and subsequent controversy between John Percy (known as John Fisher) and William Laud, later Archbishop of Canterbury. The second was the controversy between the Jesuit Matthew Wilson, who wrote under the name of Edward Knott, and Christopher Potter. William

Chillingworth* joined Potter's defense with his *Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation,* a devastating rebuttal of infallibilist arguments which remained a classic form of Anglican defense and counter-attack for the rest of the century. Other Romanists who pressed the battle were Hugh Cressy, John Vincent Canes, Henry Holden, Thomas White, Edward Worsley, and William Rushworth. Perhaps the most notable of them all, not because he was more competent than the others—indeed, he was perhaps on the whole less competent—but because he was much more vociferous, was John Sergeant (1622–1707), the special foe of Stillingfleet and Tillotson,† who seldom put down his pen during the last forty years of his life and who actually died with it clutched in his fist. His famous and representative book was *Sure-Footing in Christianity, or Rational Discourses on the Rule of Faith,* which provides an excellent illustration of the form usually taken by the English version of the *machine de guerre.*

A rule of faith, according to Sergeant, must possess these characteristics:

> It must be plain and self-evident as to its existence to all, and evidenceable as to its ruling power to enquirers even the rude vulgar, apt to settle and justify undoubting persons, to satisfy fully the most sceptical dissenters, and rational doubters, and to convince the most obstinate and acute adversaries, built upon unmoveable grounds, that is certain in itself, and absolutely ascertainable to us.[29]

Those Protestants who mastered Sergeant's prose would not have asserted that the Bible fulfilled completely his qualifications for a rule of faith; but the Latitudinarians, with some others, would have said that the Bible certified by reason could do so. It was precisely Sergeant's point, however, that reason was incapable of such a task. Even, he said, if it were admitted that the Bible was the inspired word of God, no one could be certain that it had been conveyed to us accurately from the original manuscripts, or translated from them properly. And what use, he asked, was reason in interpreting the Scriptures, even in so fundamental a point as that of Christ's deity? Even the most learned had quarrelled on such points, so that ordinary men "who are yet capable of salvation, and so of faith, and so of the rule of faith,"[30] could not be expected to have any business with biblical exegesis.

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* [The godson of Laud, Chillingworth was actually led to become a Catholic through the impact of the *machine de guerre.* He then applied it, in turn, on his Catholic beliefs, and returned to England, where he wrote the famous and influential *Religion of Protestants.*[27]—RHP

† [It is of interest that Sergeant was a friend of Thomas Hobbes and an opponent of John Locke.[28]—RHP]

Sergeant carried the point still further. "It may," he said, "be alleged that some of these defects may be provided against by skill in history."

> But 'tis quickly replied, that then none can be secure of their rule of faith, nor consequently have faith, unless skilled in histories or knowing those men to be so, and withal unbiased, whom they converse with; nay, without knowing that those men knew certainly the historians whom they relied on had secure grounds, and not bare hearsay for what they writ, and that they were not contradicted by others either extant or perished.

Not even the best scholar could be absolutely certain on these points, Sergeant said; still less could the rest of mankind. "And," he continued, "if they cannot, how then is their faith rational . . . and not rather than a hair-brained opinionative rashness to build their assent, faith and salvation upon principles they can make no judgment of?"[31]

It was all very well, Sergeant continued, to discourse about "fundamentals" as being clearly set forth in the Bible, but were they really? Was it clearer, he asked, that Christ was divine than that God possessed the hands and feet bestowed upon him by the Old Testament? As for doubters and sceptics, who were among the most intelligent of men, the difficulties in convincing them that the Bible was the word of God were insurmountable. "Let any man go about to demonstrate to those great wits," he said, "these points,"

> That the Scripture's letter was writ by men divinely inspired, That there is never a real one however there may be many seeming contradictions in it, and this to be shown out of the very letter itself; That just this catalogue or number of books is enough for the rule of faith, and no one necessary that was lost, none be abated; or, if so, how many; That the originals out of which the translations were made, were entire and uncorrupted; That the first translations were skillfully and rightly made, and afterwards derived down sincere, notwithstanding the errableness of thousands of transcribers, printers, correctors, &c. and the malice of ancient heretics and Jews who had it in their hands: And lastly, That this, and this only is the true sense of it; to which is requisite great skill in languages . . . grammar . . . criticism . . . history . . . logic . . . nature and metaphysics . . . but especially in divinity both speculative and moral; which (by the way) supposes faith and comes after it, and so cannot be presupposed to the rule of faith which precedes it. Let any man, I say, go about to demonstrate all these difficult points to those acute men and will they not smile at his endeavors?[32*]

Thus Sergeant thought that it was impossible, or at least too difficult, for reason to demonstrate the Bible to be an adequate grounds for belief in Christianity; but he asserted that his own rule of faith, "oral tradition" could easily be defended by rational evidences. Tillotson and Stillingfleet

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* [Most of these points are also made by the Quaker polemicist Samuel Fisher in *The Rustics Alarm to the Rabbies* of 1660.[33]—RHP]

lost no time in informing him that his sceptical arguments against the Scriptures could be turned against any rule of faith whatsoever. But though the positive arguments of Sergeant and the other Roman apologists might easily be met, the Latitudinarians recognized that their negative arguments required careful treatment, for such arguments as Sergeant's gave three options, not just the two of Protestantism and Catholicism; a man could accept Sergeant's premises about the Bible, but reject his conclusions about Romanism, becoming instead a Deist or a sceptic. The challenge of the *machine de guerre* therefore involved the Latitudinarians not only in a defense of Anglicanism, but also in a systematic defense of revealed Christianity. Without that challenge, we might not have what are some of the clearest, most precise, and most elaborate expositions of their rational theology.

Burnet was correct in suggesting that the Latitudinarians were the most active in the Anglican clergy in opposing the *machine de guerre.* It was, for example, against Sergeant that Tillotson wrote his *Rule of Faith* (1666) and Stillingfleet his *Discourse concerning the Nature and Grounds of the Certainty of Faith* (1688). Stillingfleet's *Rational Account of the Grounds of the Protestant Religion* (1664) was part of a revival of the Laud-Fisher controversy. Glanvill's "Scepticism and Certainty," the second of his *Essays on Several Important Subjects in Philosophy and Religion* (1672), was directed against the Jesuit Thomas White. Burnet's *Rational Method for Proving the Truth of the Christian Religion as it is Professed in the Church of England* (1675) was an answer to an infallibilist tract by the Jesuit John Ken. Wilkins's *Principles and Duties of Natural Religion* was directed as much against infallibilism as it was against infidelity. And Tenison's *Discourse concerning a Guide in Matters of Faith* (1683) was, like many of his other works, concerned to refute the assertions of promoters of the *machine de guerre* and to expound the rational foundations of Anglicanism.

Hobbists, then, might oppose "reason" to natural religion; the Deists' appeal to "reason" might in turn oppose natural religion to revelation; Romanists might cry up "reason" as proof of Catholic infallibility—but the Latitudinarians thought that their own system of rational religion could easily show those other uses of "reason" to be dangerous error or sophistry. Thralls to enthusiasm, superstition, and fanaticism might imperil the unity of the Church of England; but right reason, the Latitudinarians thought, could set them right, if only they would hearken to it. Against such enemies, the Latitudinarians felt that they could say with Glanvill, "The advantage is all ours. We have steel and brass for our defense, and they have little but twigs and bull-rushes for the assault; we have light, and firm ground, and they are lost in smoke and mists; they

tread among bogs and dangerous fens, and reel near the rocks and steeps."[34]

But though the Latitudinarians thought "reason" to be the best possible weapon against their adversaries, they did not consider themselves any more as defenders of the faith than as its confessors and witnesses. In an age when confidence in human reason ran high, none trusted it so much as they did. This was because they were successors of that host of Christian apologists who for centuries had stressed the agreement of reason and revelation. To one degree or another, they were in the tradition of the rational theologians of medieval scholasticism, of Hooker and the Laudians, of the Dutch Arminians, the Cambridge Platonists, and Falkland's circle at Great Tew. The Latitudinarians, like those others, believed that reason was a gift from God, and ought to be employed in his service. Like the others, as we shall see, the demonstration of the usefulness of "reason" to religion represented to them the discharge of their solemn obligation of men of God to preach the Gospel, an obligation incumbent on the clergy no matter what the time and place or the nature of the foe.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE LATITUDINARIANS' CONCEPTION OF "REASON"

No one work contains an exhaustive exposition of the Latitudinarian system of faith and reason.* Stillingfleet's *Origines Sacrae* (1662) was the first orderly treatment of the rational religion of Latitudinarianism, and it remained the most complete. That he was revising it at the time of his death shows that he was aware that it could have been improved and enlarged. Tillotson planned to write a *Summa Theologiae Religionis Christianae in quatuor libros distributa;* his outline of it, written in Latin, is the entry in his Commonplace Book for 1 March 1690–1.[1] Had he not assumed the more pressing duties of Primate later in the year, we might now possess a convenient compendium of Latitudinarian theology, especially concerning the relations between "faith" and "reason," the projected subject of the first three books. But no matter: his system of rational Christianity pervades the entire corpus of his sermons, and from them can be sufficiently reconstructed. Stillingfleet and Tillotson were the most articulate spokesmen of their group on the problem of reason in religion. The writings of Wilkins, Glanvill, Fowler, and Burnet are next in importance for an exposition of the Latitudinarian theology of faith and reason. Though Lloyd, Patrick, and Tenison did not concern themselves so much with the problem as the others did, there can be no doubt that an identical rationalism was the informing principle of their apologetics.

It has been said of the Latitudinarians what in fact was true of most seventeenth-century English writers concerned with the problem of reason in religion, that they "were more ready to praise reason than to define it."[2] This statement is both true and untrue. It is untrue in the sense that, as we shall see, they had a comparatively clear idea of what they meant by reason, and also in the sense that their writings contain numerous disquisitions on the nature of reason. It is true in the sense that, with the exception of Glanvill, they never wrote about "reason" in the disin-

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* [The fundamental issue this study deals with has been recast by scholars since the study was completed. The Latitudinarian conception of reason is now generally conceived to have been a resolution of the sceptical crisis. Popkin and Van Leeuwen have presented it in this form, and their description of the Latitudinarian view as a form of mitigated scepticism has come to be used in most discussions of the period. Dr. Griffin indicated to the editors his intention of revising his definition in the light of the more current formulation. Although his terminology may at times appear outdated, his study is a very careful definition that is entirely compatible with later formulations.—RHP]

terested fashion of the systematic epistemologist, but always as part and parcel of a defense of revealed Christianity. Consequently, their discussions of reason usually were, in effect, *obiter dicta*, or else especially tailored or telescoped for a particular purpose, expository or controversial. This often makes it difficult to be certain what precisely they thought "reason" was; but a study of their works taken together reveals a clear pattern of the meaning they assigned to the concept. The Latitudinarians' theory of knowledge may seem primitive and unsophisticated to present-day heirs of subsequent centuries of epistemological inquiry, but in their own day it was an instrument adequate for their purpose of affirming to their contemporaries the "reasonableness of Christianity."

With the Latitudinarians, "reason" can be defined briefly as the means by which certainty is attained, through the assent of the mind to evidence proposed to it. Like all definitions of reason, this one raises more problems than it solves, and we must inquire what "evidence" meant, what "assent" and "certainty" were, and what the mind was conceived to be.

We shall begin with "evidence," relying on Wilkins's *Principles and Practices of Natural Religion* which contains the most precise and elaborate description of the kinds of evidence that the Latitudinarians admitted to their theory of knowledge. According to Wilkins, evidence could be divided into two broad classifications, "simple" evidence, and the evidence of "experience." Simple evidence was comprised (1) of the evidence of the senses, both "inward" and "outward," and (2) of the evidence of the "understanding." The outward senses were those of sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch; these, Wilkins said, are the "first and highest kind of evidence of which human nature is capable," and of the five, sight was the best and most reliable. The inward senses included the mind's consciousness of impressions upon the outward senses, together with its awareness of its own operations, "by which we can at any time be assured of what we think, or what we desire and purpose."[3]

The second sort of simple evidence, arising from the "understanding," derived either from the "nature of things in themselves," or from the testimony of other men. Evidence from the "nature of things" arose when "there is such a congruity or incongruity betwixt the terms of a proposition, or the deductions of one proposition from another, as does either satisfy the mind, or else leave it in doubt and hesitation about them."[4] Propositions of this sort included not only the self-evident axiomata of logic and mathematics, and deductions from them, but also such other propositions as that an unprejudiced mind is better fit to pass judgment than a biased one; that there are such things as virtue or vice; and that it is reasonable and socially convenient for men to keep their contracts.

The evidence of testimony was evidence arising from the experiences and judgments of other men, "when we depend upon the credit and relation of others for the truth or falsehood of anything." Testimony was necessary because there are "several things which we cannot otherwise know, but as others do inform us of them. As namely, matters of fact, together with the account of persons and places at a distance." Such evidence, Wilkins warned, must be treated carefully, for it was "more or less clear, according to the authority and credit of the witness."[5] "Universal tradition" and written history both came under the heading of testimony.

Wilkins's second chief classification of evidence, "experience," was what he called a "mixed evidence," combining the evidence from the senses, both inward and outward, with the evidence of the understanding, and depending "upon our own observation and repeated trials of the issues and events of actions and things."[6] This is not much different from Locke's definition of experience as "observation, employed either about external sensible objects, or about the internal operations of our minds perceived and reflected on by ourselves."[7]

From evidence proceeded assent, which provided either "knowledge" or "certainty" on the one hand, or "opinion" and "probability" on the other. Wilkins defined knowledge or certainty as "that kind of assent which does arise from such plain and clear evidence as does not admit of any reasonable cause of doubting";[8] opinion or probability arose when evidence was not that plain and clear. Since certainty was a function of evidence, and since there were different kinds of evidence, Wilkins therefore posited three different kinds and degrees of certainty: (1) "physical certainty"; (2) "mathematical certainty"; and (3) "moral certainty."

Physical certainty proceeded from assent to the evidence of the senses, and, Wilkins said, possessed "conditional infallibility." There was no such thing, he said in an aside directed against Roman Catholic apologists, as "absolute infallibility"; such was an incommunicable attribute of God, and to claim it was blasphemy. The conditional infallibility attached to physical certainty was postulated upon the assumption that "our faculties be true, and that we do not neglect the exerting of them." Upon that supposition, Wilkins said, "there is a necessity that some things must be so as we apprehend them, and that they cannot possibly be otherwise."[9]

Mathematical certainty was elicited from the evidence of "the nature of things in themselves," insofar as they related to the self-sufficient principles of mathematics and logic, and deductions from them: "all such simple abstracted beings, as in their own natures do lie so open, and are so obvious to the understanding, that every man's judgment (though never

so much prejudiced) must necessarily assent to them."[10] No one, Wilkins said, could doubt that the whole was greater than one of its parts, or that contradictions cannot both be true. Mathematical certainty, like physical certainty, had "conditional infallibility"; that is, they were both equally "certain."

"I call that moral certainty," Wilkins wrote, "which has for its objects such things as are less simple, and do more depend upon mixed circumstances. Which though they are not capable of the same kind of evidence with the former, so as to necessitate every man's assent, though his judgment be never so much prejudiced against them; yet may they be so plain, that every man whose judgment is free from prejudice will consent unto them." He added, "And though there be no natural necessity, that such things must be so, and that they cannot possibly be otherwise, without implying a contradiction; yet may they be so certain as not to admit of any reasonable doubt concerning them."[11] Moral certainty was not "conditionally infallible," but it was "indubitable"; and indubitable certainty, Wilkins said, was "the only certainty of which most things are capable."[12] The "mixed" evidence producing moral certainty were three: (1) the "mixed" evidence of experience; (2) testimony; and (3) those principles of the "nature of things" which did not possess mathematical certainty by virtue of their self-evidence. Experience, for example, would make a man morally certain of the succession of the days and seasons; and only a "fantastical incredulous fool" would doubt the existence, certified by eye-witnesses, of Spain and Queen Elizabeth.[13]

The Latitudinarians insisted again and again that even if, in theory, certainty admitted of degrees, moral certainty being lower than physical or mathematical certainty, such a distinction could not and ought not to be made in practice. Time and time again they returned to their assertion that so far as actual assent to evidence is concerned, all three kinds of certainty were on a level of qualitative parity. "The nature of certainty," Stillingfleet wrote, "is not so much to be taken from the matters themselves, as from the grounds inducing the assent; that is, whether the things be mathematical, physical, or moral; if there be no reason to question the grounds of belief, the case is all one as to the nature of assent." He concluded, therefore, "that moral certainty may be as great as mathematical and physical, supposing as little reason to doubt in moral things as to their natures, as in mathematical or physical in theirs."[14] Such being so, Tillotson said, it must "be entertained as a firm principle by all those who pretend to be certain of anything at all, that when anything . . . is proved by as good arguments as a thing of that kind is capable of, and we have as great assurance that it is as we could possibly have supposing it were, we ought not in reason to make any doubt of the existence of that

thing."[15] Insistently the Latitudinarians emphasized this point: that no person with his wits about him should demand in proof of something a kind of evidence of which that thing was not capable.* If a thing were proved by as good evidence as was suitable to it, then the certainty arising from that evidence involved an assent just as strong in practice as any other kind of assent.

We shall see that this concept of moral certainty was the linchpin of the Latitudinarians' rational theology, and the basic element of their defense of revealed Christianity. Fowler, in his *Free Discourse*, asserted that the principle of moral certainty was a distinctive characteristic of Latitudinarian apologetics.[16] Of Wilkins, Tillotson, Stillingfleet, and Fowler himself, that assertion was explicitly and unquestionably true. Of Tenison, Patrick, Burnet, and Lloyd, it was inaccurate in that they did not use the phrase in their writings; but it will be remembered that these men did not dwell so much or so specifically on the problem of reason in religion as the others did. Fowler's statement was true of them, however, in the sense that the concept was, as we shall see, implicit in their conception of reason in religion. Glanvill's terminology was different from that of Wilkins, Stillingfleet, Tillotson, and Fowler, in that he merged "physical," "mathematical," and "moral" certainties into the single category of "indubitable certainty." But the difference in terminology does not signify a difference in their systems; Wilkins's categories may easily be applied to Glanvill's theory of knowledge without doing essential violence to it; and in any event, as we shall see, the final results in respect of rational religion were the same.

The Latitudinarians admitted that the road to certainty was beset by certain difficulties. On the sources of error to which the human mind is prey, Glanvill's *Vanity of Dogmatizing* (1661) was elaborately specific. Like Wilkins, Glanvill distinguished three operations of the human mind which must take place before the attainment of certainty. The first was the simple apprehension of single objects. If the apprehension was of present objects, it was by sense; if of absent objects, by "imagination." Both sense and imagination, Glanvill said, could be fecund sources of error. Human senses, he said, were "scant and limited,"[17] and were liable to mislead because they could perceive only the appearances of things, which were often deceiving, like the crookedness of a stick in water or the differences in the colors of an object when seen from different angles. Since senses were "uncommensurate to the vastness and profundity of

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* [Their argument derives from Aristotle's contention that one should always seek for the kind of evidence applicable to a given discipline and problem. Aristotle is frequently cited by the Latitudinarians, as is Grotius to the same effect.—RHP]

things, and therefore cannot receive the just images of them," our judgments based upon them could lead to "infinite errors, and mistakes."[18]

Imagination was a worse enemy of truth, when the mind performed its second act of "judging," or combining simple apprehensions into propositions. In itself, Glanvill said, imagination did not deceive men, "yet it is the almost fatal means of our deception, through the unwarrantable compositions, divisions, and applications, which it occasions the second act to make of the simple images.[19] The third act of the mind was what Wilkins called "ratiocination," and what Glanvill called "reason": "a connecting of propositions and deducing of conclusions from them."[20] Since the third act presupposed the former two, a derangement of the imagination could have serious consequences in the conclusions reached by "reason." In its worst form, Glanvill thought, it produced the extravagances of enthusiasm, whereby men might quite sincerely believe themselves visited by "strange images of extraordinary apparitions of God, and angels; of voices, and revelations."[21]

In any one of these three acts of the mind, Glanvill saw impediments to knowledge in the "affections," which either influenced or were a function of the "will and passions." Affections impeded knowledge either by self-love, as in "natural disposition," "custom and education," and "interest"; or else by love for others, as in "over-fond reverence to antiquity and authority."[22] By "natural disposition," Glanvill meant that there was "a certain congruity of some opinions to the particular tempers of some men,"[23] the very constitution of their minds making it easy or difficult for them to assent to one proposition or another. "Even some theories in philosophy," he wrote, "will not lie in some minds, that are otherwise very capable and ingenious." Hence, he said, some men "cannot conceive a spirit (or any being) without an extension; whereas others say, they cannot conceive, but that whatever is extended is impenetrable, and consequently corporeal."[24] This sort of diversity arising from "some difference in the natural temper" of men's minds was what produced the errors, for example of the honest Hobbist. Often "natural disposition" was the result of custom and education: "Our first age," Glanvill wrote, "is like melted wax to the prepared seal, that receives any impression; and we suck in the opinions of our clime and country, as we do the common air, without thought, or choice."[25] Hence what men found unfamiliar, they might on that account alone condemn as untrue or unreasonable.

"Interest" led men to believe true what they wanted to be true, either for motives of profit or power; Glanvill thought it had an unusually potent influence on men's judgments. "I do not think," he said, "that the learned assertors of vain, and false religions, and opinions, do always

profess against their consciences; rather their interest brings their consciences to their profession."[26] Here Glanvill had the Roman Catholic clergy chiefly in mind: like the other Latitudinarians, he usually ascribed the Popish errors of laymen to custom and education, those of the priesthood and hierarchy to interest. And besides these errors arising from self-love, there were also those consequent upon superstitious reverence for the opinions of antiquity or authority: as a defender of the Royal Society, Glanvill made those, especially the bastions of Aristotelianism, the special target of attack.*

Glanvill's purpose in *The Vanity of Dogmatizing* was not to despair of knowledge, but to clear the way for its advancement. In *Plus Ultra: or, the Progress and Advancement of Knowledge Since the Days of Aristotle* (1668), Glanvill defended the experimental method of the Royal Society as the best means to combat in science and philosophy the tendencies to error that he had described in *The Vanity of Dogmatizing*. And against a charge of scepticism from the Jesuit Thomas White, Glanvill wrote *Scire/i tuum nihil est: or, The Author's Defense of the Vanity of Dogmatizing* (1664),[28] which outlined the positive elements of his theory of knowledge, which were almost identical with those of Wilkins's system. Additionally, it is essential to note that *The Vanity of Dogmatizing* was not directed so much to matters that he thought were capable of "indubitable certainty," but against arrogant confidence in "uncertainties," or matters of mere opinion or probability. His main point was that dogmatizing in such uncertainties was "the greatest enemy to what is certain,"[29] and in both science and religion obscured the truth and caused needless and unfruitful controversy. While he advised humility and caution in the search for certainty, Glanvill still had a high estimation of the power of the human mind to overcome its infirmities and to surmount the pitfalls to truth.

The other Latitudinarians shared this confidence, but with them it was unquestionably higher than Glanvill's. The main reason for this was that they conceived of the geography of the human mind as being simpler, and its operations as being less complicated than Glanvill did. We will recall Glanvill's caveats about sense and imagination. Wilkins did not mention "imagination" in his description of the three acts of the mind, which otherwise was identical to that given by Glanvill. Tillotson did not "so well understand the distinction between understanding and imagination, as to be careful to take notice of it."[30] Again, Wilkins was more confident than Glanvill was of the accuracy of sense-perception. Glanvill

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* [Glanvill's discussion shows the influence of Sextus Empiricus,[27] Descartes, and More. He was initially very impressed with Descartes, but then seemed to adopt Henry More's criticism, especially More's answer to extreme Cartesian scepticism, and to have added criticism of his own.—RHP]

was acutely aware of the distinction between primary and secondary qualities. By this distinction, which was a seventeenth-century "scientific" commonplace popularized by Descartes, the "real" qualities of an object were the primary ones of solidity, extension, figure, motion, rest, and number. Secondary qualities, such as color and taste, did not inhere in the object, but were produced in the mind of the perceiver by primary qualities. They were the "appearances" taken by reality, not reality itself. Curiously, the scientist Wilkins seems to have ignored this distinction, and to have written of colors as if they were objective qualities in objects perceived.[31] Again, Glanvill thought of the will as being a different faculty from the understanding. Tillotson, on the other hand, stated that the "heart," the "soul," the "mind," the "understanding," and the "will" were all merely different aspects of each other.[32] Similarly, Fowler wrote of the will that it was "no really distinct faculty from the understanding, nor from the soul either; but the soul itself, as it simply understands or apprehends an object . . . or as by comparing one with another it judges of them, is called the understanding; and as it puts itself forward toward the doing or having anything, or refuses so to do, it is called the will."[33] Examples of this sort could be multiplied, but these will suffice. The effect of such confidence in sense perception, of ignoring "imagination," and of identifying the "understanding" with the "will" is to posit a theory of cognition in which the dangers of subjectivity are placed at an extreme discount. Thereby knowledge becomes more easily accessible, and the nature of assent is conceived as being semi-automatic, given sufficient evidence. Like Glanvill, the other Latitudinarians were aware of dangers from what Stillingfleet called "the several tinctures from education, authority, custom and predisposition,"[34] as well as interference from the will (whether faculty or function) through interests, passions, and appetites. The point is that they thought them less important and more manageable than Glanvill did, and so had a greater tendency to blame error on stubbornness or obstinacy; for the mind, as Tillotson explicitly said, is so constructed that it is "our own fault" if we find ourselves deceived in anything important.[35]

Although Glanvill thought that it was harder to circumvent the source of error than did the other Latitudinarians, they all agreed that it could be done. Once it was done, assent was automatic. Fowler, speaking in the *Free Discourse* for the group, said, "Our understandings are not free, as are our wills; but the acts of them are natural and necessary. Nor can they judge but according to the evidence that is presented."[36] Once sufficient evidence was presented, however, "nothing hinders the assent of men," Tillotson wrote, "but their own perverseness and obstinacy, which usually proceeds from opposition of their lusts, or passions, or interest,

to the truth which is propounded to them."[37] By this sort of necessitarian scheme, the mind was much like a machine, comparable perhaps to an electronic analogue computer: if it did not reach the proper conclusions from evidence fed into it, then it had insufficient data, or there was something interfering with the electrical feedback. Consequently, as Wilkins observed, "the judgments of men, must by a natural necessity, preponderate on that side where the greatest evidence lies."[38] Furthermore, the reasoning process was not only objective and automatic, it was also universal in the sense that given the same evidence, different men will come to precisely the same conclusion: in his discussion of the three acts of the mind, Wilkins stated that the operations of "judging" and "ratiocination" must necessarily proceed in all men with the same mechanical simplicity as "simple apprehension," whereby all men looking at the same object see the same thing.[39] Such a notion of the mind gave the Latitudinarians their confidence that, as Glanvill wrote, "what our understandings declare of things clearly and distinctly perceived by us, is truly so, and agreeing with the realities of things themselves."[40] For if an unprejudiced and dispassionate mind assents automatically to compelling evidence; if evidence of a thing as good as that thing is capable of can give "indubitable" certainty; and if assent cannot be given without evidence—then a clear and distinct idea of something could not have been formed if it were not true.

Fundamental to the Latitudinarians' belief that human faculties were "not mere imposters and deceivers, but report things to us as they are"[41] was the religious conviction that a God of veracity and benevolence would not deceive men. Because God was a God of truth, Tillotson said, "we may be assured, that the frame of our understanding is not a cheat, but that our faculties are true."[42] Such being so, the Latitudinarian theory of knowledge posited an essential harmony between the mind and reality. This harmony found its expression in the "light of nature," a phrase which recurs time and again in their writings. The notion of the light of nature had its roots in scholastic philosophy, and before that in ancient philosophy, particularly Stoicism. During the seventeenth century, *pari passu* with the growth of science and natural religion, it gained renewed emphasis. Belief in the light of nature presumed a static, orderly external reality governed by law, whether moral or "natural"; because it was governed by law, it was therefore accessible to human reason. Truth emerged when one's mind was placed by right thinking in congruence with that reality. A notion of the light of nature could include belief in innate ideas in the sense in which Descartes popularized them; but it did not necessarily do so, and with the Latitudinarians it did not. What it had to include was at least a notion of an innate faculty of thinking by innate

modes of thought, both answering to the inherent rationality of the exterior universe. By this scheme, rationality was inherent in the processes of the mind as a part of the rational universe; or, to put it differently, the rationality implicit in the constitution of reality infused the structure of thought. This is what Wilkins meant when he established his category of evidence from the "nature of things in themselves." That 'the whole is larger than the part' was not an innate idea in the sense that it was an object of knowledge implanted in the mind prior to all experience and reasoning. Rather it was a proposition carrying such evidential force that the mind, by virtue of its innate attunement to reality, was unable to resist assent to it.

Glanvill provided the clearest illustration of what the Latitudinarians meant by the light of nature. In his essay, "The Agreement of Reason and Religion" (1676), he divided "reason" into two categories, "reason in the faculty," and "reason in the object." The division was an arbitrary one intended for purposes of exposition, because for the most part the two "reasons" could not subsist or operate independently of each other. "Reason in the faculty" included the first two acts of the mind, and "reason in the object" referred to the third. In simple apprehension and judgment, Glanvill said, men were apt to be misled by their senses, imaginations, affections, and interests, so that "reason in the faculty" could be imperfect. The third act of the mind was grounded in "reason in the object," which contained the "very essentials of rationality." "Reason in the object" included the unchanging and immutable principles of "natural truth," and was identical with Wilkins's "nature of things in themselves"; among his examples, Glanvill gave these: That nothing has no attributes; That a thing cannot both exist and not exist; and That the whole was greater than any of its parts. Such principles as these, Glanvill said, constituted the objective reality to which the mind was instinctively attuned. They constituted a reliable safeguard against error, because when "reason in the faculty" conformed to the dictates of the external "reason in the object," the mind could have indubitable certainty of truth.[43]*

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* [Glanvill has been the subject of much study. Some scholars, like Jackson Cope, have doubted whether he had a coherent philosophical system; others, like Richard Popkin, Sascha Talmor, and Henry Van Leeuwen, have seen him as the most explicit expositor of scepticism in England before Hume. The exact character of his scepticism is still subject to debate. Whatever the modern assessment, Glanvill seems to have been more concerned with sceptical possibilities than Wilkins. He realized that everything could be doubted if our faculties were unreliable. The belief in the competence of our faculties was an act of faith, and the belief that God would not deceive, a proposition that can be proven only by using our questionable faculties.[44]—RHP]

The thoroughly intellectual nature of the Latitudinarians' epistemology; their distrust or discounting of "imagination" and their tendency to ignore the distinctions of the traditional faculty psychology; their concern that the "rational part of the soul" which produced "full conviction, deliberate choice, and firm resolution" should completely govern the "sensitive" part, including "the fancy and the appetite," which operated by "some hidden *impetus* and transport of desire after a thing"[45]—all these and other elements of their thought point to a clear influence of Stoicism. Seventeenth-century England witnessed a revival of Stoic psychology and ethics, to which the Latitudinarians were prominent contributors: Wilkins, for example, in his *Principles and Duties of Natural Religion*, by lengthy and frequent quotations from the Stoic sages Seneca, Lucan, Musonius, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius, permitted them to say almost as much as he did himself. The Latitudinarians' neo-Stoicism, as will later become clear, was mainly a function of their desire to prove Christianity "reasonable." Both in the principles and duties it advanced, Stoicism was the nearest pagan equivalent of Christianity, and therefore furnished proof that revealed religion was firmly grounded in natural religion, that is, in reason. And obviously, if one equated Stoic religious and moral doctrines, as the Latitudinarians tended to, with the conclusions of right reason, then the epistemology of neo-Stoicism provided an admirable means of counter-attacking the Hobbesian neo-Epicureanism of the seventeenth century, as well as enthusiasm and "fanaticism."

Here, then, is the Latitudinarians' conception of reason. It was highly eclectic, combining many of the epistemological *idées claires* of their day. The main avenues of approach to knowledge in the seventeenth century may be divided roughly into two, which may be generally termed the "Baconian" and the "Cartesian." The first distrusted the operations of the mind unless continuously certified by sensation; the second distrusted the evidence of the senses unless continually measured against the certainty produced by the operations of the mind. If Glanvill is left aside for a moment, the Latitudinarians may be said to have preempted the best of both approaches. So confident were they of all human faculties, that they spoke with equal trust of the evidence from the senses, and of the ratiocinative process when it relied upon the "nature of things in themselves." Or to put it into Wilkins's terminology, both mathematical and physical certainty carried the same assurance of conditional infallibility. As for Glanvill, when all is said and done, he had great confidence in the evidence of sense, and in his epistemology, sense-perception was prior to and necessary for any knowledge whatsoever. Nevertheless, he trusted "reason in the object" more than "reason in the faculty," and so may be said to have been, more exclusively than the others, an adherent of the

Cartesian approach.* The others, including Wilkins, were not so interested in epistemology *per se* as was Glanvill, and so had a comparatively uncomplicated commonsense attitude toward knowledge: they simply assumed that their faculties were true and that reality was what they perceived it to be. They could do this chiefly because their discussions of "reason" were almost always ancillary to proofs of the truth of Christianity. "Reason" thus had a highly postulational character: that is, the Latitudinarians invoked it to demonstrate what they already assumed to be certain. Such being so, it was unnecessary for them to belabor epistemological niceties, beyond the point necessary to display what they insistently termed "the reasonableness of Christianity."

* [Glanvill, however, specifically applied the sceptical technique to Descartes's philosophical/scientific views.—RHP]

CHAPTER SIX

THE REASONABLENESS OF CHRISTIANITY

"Reason" with the Latitudinarians, as we have seen, was the process of assent to evidence of various types, and the attainment of knowledge or certainty implicit in that assent. "Faith" was the same thing: it differed from reason in that its object was divine truth and not natural truth, but as a *process* it was precisely the same thing as reason. "Faith is a rational and discursive act of the mind," Stillingfleet wrote, "for faith being an assent upon evidence, or reason inducing the mind to assent, it must be a rational and discursive act; and such a one that one may be able to give an account of to another."[1]

The Latitudinarians were impatient of other definitions of faith. Tillotson admitted that the word might properly be used for "the particular grace or virtue which is called fidelity, or faithfulness in our promises and contracts," or for "spiritual gifts, and particularly the gift of miracles," but such notions he thought were "very alien and remote from the common and usual acceptance of the word." Some, especially the verbose schoolmen, had found as many as twenty significations of the word; for himself, Tillotson could not find nearly so many; and in any event, as he remarked somewhat restively, there was no need to puzzle over the subject greatly, for "there is not any word that is in common use, that is more plain and easy, and which anyone may understand better than this of faith. . . ."[2]

"Faith," he declared, "is a persuasion of the mind concerning any thing; concerning the truth of any proposition, concerning the existence, or futurition, or lawfulness, or convenience, or possibility, or goodness of any thing, or the contrary; or concerning the credit of a person, or the contrary." And by metonomy faith can mean "the argument whereby this persuasion is wrought in us," and sometimes the word signifies the "object of this persuasion."[3] The simplistically rational nature of his conception of faith, as well as the extremely uncomplex notion he had of the geography of the human mind, emerge startlingly from his idea of the seat of faith. "The seat or subject of faith is the mind, or the heart, as the Scripture usually calls it. 'With the heart man believes,' that is, with the soul: for I do not understand any real distinction of faculties; but if you will distinguish them, the proper seat of this persuasion is the understanding; the immediate effect of it is upon the will; by which it works

upon the affections and the life."[4] The heart has no reasons that the mind knows not of.

Faith, as thus defined, Tillotson reduced to two categories: (1) "Civil or humane, under which I comprehend the persuasion of things moral, and natural, and political, and the like"; and (2) "Divine or religious, that is, a persuasion of things that concern religion." Faith in the first sense was "reason" pure and simple. We are here concerned with "divine faith," which Tillotson divided into three classifications: (1) "Persuasion of the principles of natural religion"; (2) "Persuasion of things supernatural, and revealed," and (3) "Persuasion of the supernatural revelation (contained in the Scriptures)."[5]

"Persuasion of Natural Religion." Apart from its duties, with which we are not here concerned, natural religion comprised three principles: (1) the existence of a God with providential attributes, the chief of which were wisdom, goodness, and power; (2) the immortality of the soul; and (3) a future state of rewards and punishments. Demonstration of the second two depended upon proof of the first. "The true notion of a Deity is most agreeable to the faculties of men's souls," Stillingfleet wrote, "and most consonant to reason and the light of nature."[6] The Latitudinarians thought that the light of nature, which presumed a congruence between reality and the operations of the mind, made the knowledge of God an almost instinctive rational act: so much so, that Glanvill listed the proposition "God is a being of all perfection" as one of the contents of "reason in the object."[7] This belief, however, that the mind "is of such a frame that in the free use and exercise of itself it will find out God,"[8] presumed other proofs of God's existence.

The Latitudinarians had a decided preference for those proofs which can be classified as cosmological. In the light of the current progress of the natural sciences, they comprised the most compelling and prestigious arguments possible. *Virtuosi* and Latitudinarians alike showed how the vast, orderly, beautiful structure of the universe could only have been made by a being who had infinite power to create it, infinite goodness to "communicate being and so many degrees of happiness to so many several sorts of creatures in it," and infinite wisdom "to contrive this admirable frame of the universe and all the creatures in it, each of them so perfect in their kind and all of them so fitted to each other and to the whole."[9]* This argument included not just the cosmological proof properly so-called, but the aesthetical and teleological ones as well. The Latitudinarians agreed with Tillotson that together they made the "most

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* [The argument from natural design seems to have taken on a new vigor beginning with Grotius's *De Veritate Religionis Christianae* (1627).—RHP]

plain" proof[10] of all. They regarded Descartes's ontological proof with caution, because they were aware of the serious objections raised to it by philosophers like Gassendi. Stillingfleet presented it with the greatest grace and skill, but saw danger in using it exclusively: so to do weakened "the known and generally received [cosmological] proofs of God and providence."[11]

"Plain" as the cosmological argument was, the defensive and occasionally irritable tone that the Latitudinarians sometimes adopted in their exposition of it betrayed their feeling that the progress of science could in the hands of "wicked and obstinate men" become a hindrance rather than a help to religion. Science confirmed both *virtuosi* and Latitudinarians in their convictions of divine providence, but the mechanico-corpuscular nature of the universe it was uncovering could cause some to doubt providence and still others to doubt the very existence of God. Consequently, whenever the Latitudinarians undertook to demonstrate God's existence, they were consciously at the same time concerned to disprove "atheism," by which they usually meant Hobbism. Time and time again, implicitly and explicitly, by name or (more often) not by name, the Latitudinarians refuted the opinions of "the ingenious author of a very bad book, I mean the *Leviathan*."[12] Worse yet was that "true disciple to the *Leviathan*," Spinoza.[13*] And as we have seen, Stillingfleet denounced Descartes's physics as showing a "tendency toward atheism" because it attributed "too much to the mechanical powers of matter and motion." Because they were so aware that science in the wrong hands could contribute to a belief in mechanical

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* [As early as 1677, Stillingfleet in his *A Letter to a Deist* publicly expressed great concern about the possibility of Spinoza's ideas becoming known in England. Yet before the Bishop's death twenty years later, that possibility had become a reality. In 1683 Charles Blount translated Spinoza's critique of miracles found in the *Tractatus* in his *Miracles, No Violations of the Laws of Nature*; in 1689, an anonymous translation of Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (possibly by Blount) appeared; in 1690 (in English in 1692), Lady Anne Conway carefully analyzed Spinoza's theory in the *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, her cogent refutation of the mechanical philosophies of Descartes, Hobbes, and Spinoza. And Stillingfleet himself in his revision of the *Origines Sacrae*, on which he was at work at his death in 1697, undertook to refute Spinoza's arguments in the *Ethics*. In addition to the influence of Spinoza's written work, his ideas were introduced into England directly by such friends as Charles de Saint-Évremond and Dr. Henri Morelli. In 1670, Saint-Évremond, who had known Spinoza during a recent six-year sojourn in Holland, moved permanently to England where for the last three decades of his life he was prominent in aristocratic—and libertine—court circles. Latitudinarian clergymen could thus hardly have been unaware of the growing interest in Spinozism in late-seventeenth century circles.[14]—RHP]

determinism, the Latitudinarians welcomed the comfortable help of *virtuosi* like Harvey and Boyle who made it their business to vindicate God's providence. It was a signal of the intersection of the two circles that the Latitudinarian *virtuosi* Wilkins and Glanvill aided in this task, and that all of the Latitudinarians had an unshakable confidence that the rational evaluation of scientific demonstration would inevitably enhance belief in divine providence, unless a man were blinded by his passions or stubborn self-interest.

To reinforce their proofs for the existence of a provident God, the Latitudinarians regularly advanced evidence from the *consensus omnium*, the notion that belief in God had been universal throughout the world at all times. The concept of the *consensus gentium*, or *consensus omnium*, was originally a Stoic one; the sanctions it received from the ancients and especially from Cicero gave it valuable prestige for sixteenth-century apologists like Richard Hooker, who wrote, "The general and perpetual voice of men is as the sentence of God himself. For that which all men have at all times learned, Nature herself must needs have taught; and God being the author of Nature, her voice is but his instrument."[15] Though it came under attack in the seventeenth century, it was still regarded as an important weapon in the arsenal of apologists who wanted to ground Christianity firmly in natural religion. As Wilkins wrote, "The universal consent of nations in all places and times . . . must needs render anything highly credible to all such as will but allow the human nature to be rational, and to be naturally endowed with a capacity of distinguishing betwixt truth and falsehood."[16] Belief in the dictates of universal consent thus assumed belief in the light of nature, because the one is a function and proof of the other. Logically, the *consensus gentium* is not a separate argument; it requires other proofs, such as the cosmological one, to illustrate the means by which man's rational processes produced it in the first place. But the notion appeared so convincing to the Latitudinarians that they usually offered it as proof in itself.

It was extremely important to the Latitudinarians to preserve the *consensus gentium* from attack. We will recall their belief that given the same evidence, men must, by a natural necessity, come to the same conclusion: such was the nature of reason. To impugn the idea of universal consent was thereby to threaten their conception of reason, with its integral and essential component of belief in the light of nature. And with them reason and faith were so much the same thing that any attack on the one was a grave threat to the other. Hence their concern to refute Hobbes's assertion that a universal belief in God had risen in the first instance from "perpetual fear, always accompanying mankind in the ignorance of causes." Such a conception of human psychology was in itself a threat to

the thoroughly intellectual epistemology of the Latitudinarians. In fact, it was impossible for them to understand man under so irrational an aspect, and their refutations of Hobbes on this point show that they seem not to have comprehended precisely what he was driving at.[17] Hobbes, implicitly at least, admitted the existence of a universal consent to God's existence, though he assigned it to irrational, not rational, causes. Locke, however, in common with some others during the century who relied on travel accounts for their information, denied even the fact of universal consent.[18]* Locke's purpose, of course, was to lay at rest the notion of innate ideas, as proof of which the *consensus omnium* had frequently been advanced. Stillingfleet's answer to Locke was the same that the Latitudinarians had been giving for decades to opponents of the *consensus gentium*: that his travel accounts were unreliable; that better ones would show the existence of religious sentiments among the peoples in question; and that in any event, the neglect or misuse of human faculties is no valid exception to the consent of the majority of men who have used their reason properly.[20]

Every proof of God's existence put forth by the Latitudinarians implicitly carried with it proof of his providential attributes, and from these attributes were derived the other two principles of natural religion. Since God was all-powerful, nothing was impossible to him. "The consideration of God's goodness would persuade a man, that as he made all things very good, so he made them of the longest duration they are capable of": hence men's souls are immortal. And "the justice of God would easily induce a man to believe, seeing the providence of God does generally in this life deal promiscuously with good and bad men, that there shall be a day which will make a difference, and every man shall receive according to his works."[21]

"Persuasion of things supernatural, and revealed" was the second kind of faith described by Tillotson. This was a faith in "things which are not known by natural light, but by some more immediate manifestation and discovery of God," as by visions, dreams, prophecies, a voice from heaven, or a "secret and gentle inspiration." Such things have now ceased, and men have the standing revelation of the Scriptures. Faith has as its object in this standing revelation six different things; and by "faith" is meant simply a persuasion that they are true: (1) history; (2) prophecy; (3) doctrine; (4) duties; (5) promises of things to come; and (6) threatenings of things to come.[22] This second kind of faith is "divine" in the same

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* [As several commentators have pointed out, Locke seems to have had Lord Herbert of Cherbury's theory of universal consent in mind. Yolton in particular has pointed out that Book I of Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* seems to have been directed in large measure against Herbert's theory.[19]—RHP]

fashion that persuasion of natural religion is divine, that is, by virtue of its objects and effects. It is also divine by virtue of its being of divine authority and testimony. But the real problem was how one can be persuaded that the Scriptures were in fact from God.

This assurance involved Tillotson's third kind of "divine faith," *"Persuasion of the supernatural revelation contained in the Scriptures."* The second sort of divine faith was a "persuasion concerning the things which are revealed from God, that they are true: this is a persuasion concerning the revelation itself, that it is divine and from God."[23] Just as natural knowledge is grounded in the reasonable assumption of the existence of a God who will not suffer his creatures to be deceived in what they clearly and distinctly perceive, so Christian faith, Glanvill said, "is an act of reason, and built upon these two reasonable principles, That there is a God; and That what he says is true."[24] As Stillingfleet put it, "If the testimony on which I am to rely be only God's, and I be assured from natural reason, that his testimony can be no other than infallible, wherein does the certainty of the foundation of faith fall short of that in any mathematical demonstration?"[25]

The statement was rhetorical and the issue not quite so simple, for the question immediately arises as to the grounds upon which one can know that a revelation is, in fact, of divine origin. Such knowledge, Stillingfleet said,

> must be fetched from those rational evidences whereby a divine testimony must be distinguished from one merely human and fallible. For the Spirit of God in his workings upon the mind, does not carry it on by a brutish impulse, but draws it by a spiritual discovery of such strong and persuasive grounds to assent to what is revealed, that the mind does readily give a firm assent to that which it sees such convincing reason to believe.[26]

These "rational evidences" with Stillingfleet and the other Latitudinarians resolved themselves ultimately into miracles. There might be other evidences, but as Tillotson said, he did not know what they might be, and whatever they were they could not possibly give so much assurance as miracles did. For it was by miracles, he said confidently, that "the main evidence of the Christian doctrine . . . is resolved into the certainty of sense."[27]

The Latitudinarians were explicit in defining a miracle. It is such a thing that only God can do, for it interrupts the regular course of nature. It is more than a mere prodigy or wonder, for as Stillingfleet argued, "every true miracle is a production of something out of nothing . . . and that either in the thing itself, when it is of that nature that it cannot be produced by any second causes, as the raising of the dead; in the manner of doing it, when though the thing lies within the possibility of second

causes, yet it is performed without the help of any of them, as in the cure of diseases without any use of means, by a word speaking, the touch of a garment. . . ."[28] Miracles are rare, for "God never alters the course of nature, but for some very considerable end," and this end is always the confirmation of a divine testimony.[29] As Stillingfleet insisted, without such confirmation, we could not know that a testimony was in fact divine: "And as all other truth has a criterion proper to it; so this seems to be the proper criterion of a divine testimony, that it has the power of miracles going along with it," for what, he asked, "can be more proper to distinguish what comes from God, and what from men, than to see those things done, which none but God can do?"[30] God in his goodness would not require a man to believe anything without such evidence, because God himself had so constructed the human mind that it cannot give assent to anything without sufficient and proper evidence. Consequently, as Tillotson declared, no pretense by an enthusiast to a divine revelation should be accepted without an accompanying miracle, for what else was a miracle, but a "supernatural effect evident to sense, the great end and design whereof is to be a sensible proof and conviction to us of something that we do not see?"[31]*

Christianity was true, therefore, because Christ worked miracles to prove its truth. But how does a Christian know that these miracles were actually performed? As with all forms of knowledge, he must have evidence, and necessarily in this case that evidence must be the evidence of testimony. As Stillingfleet said, "Where the truth of a doctrine depends upon a matter of fact, the truth of the doctrine is sufficiently manifested, if the matter of fact be evidently proved in the highest way it is capable of. . . . The greatest evidence which can be given of a matter of fact, is the attesting of it by those persons who were eye-witnesses of it." Especially was this so, "when the matter they bear witness to is a thing which they might easily and clearly perceive," and "when many witnesses exactly agree in the same testimony." These things having been established, "There can be no reason to suspect such a testimony which is given by eye-witnesses, but either from questioning their knowledge of the things they spake of, or their fidelity in reporting them."[33]

Miracles above all else could be easily and clearly seen; and the Apostles agreed in their reporting of them; besides, the Scriptures mentioned other witnesses to certain miracles, as for example the 500 men who saw the resurrected Christ. And the Apostles could not possibly be

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* [David Hume begins his discussion of miracles in *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding* with a summary of Tillotson's argument against the real presence, describing it "as concise and elegant and strong as any argument can possibly be supposed against a doctrine so little worthy of a serious refutation."[32]—RHP]

questioned as to their competence to report on the life and actions of Christ: they were with him as constant companions, and as Patrick said, "they scarce saw anything else but miracles."[34] And how can anyone doubt their fidelity in reporting what they saw? They gave up all worldly goods, and undertook disgrace and persecution and death itself for the sake of the truths they asserted. Would they have done all this "for the sake of something which was merely the fiction of their own brains"?[35] The competence and integrity of eye-witnesses having been established, Stillingfleet said, "No testimony ought to be taken against a matter of fact thus attested, but from such persons who had greater knowledge of the things attested, and manifest greater fidelity in reporting them."[36] In the case of Christ's life and miracles, no such contradictory evidence existed: indeed, the Scriptures themselves confirmed that vast numbers of the Apostles' contemporaries freely were persuaded of the truth of the Gospel, and their minds could not have given assent to Christianity if the evidence against it had been stronger than the evidence for it. Consequently, no one can doubt that Christ's miracles actually took place, for "matters of fact being first believed on the account of eye-witnesses, and received with universal and uncontrolled assent by all such persons who have thought themselves concerned in knowing the truth of them, do yield a sufficient foundation for a firm assent to be built upon."[37]

The Latitudinarians were faced with two problems relating to miracles. The first was the common scientific assumption of the universality of the laws regulating the course of natural events. The other was the Roman Catholic claim to be the true Church because of the continuity of miracles within its fold, even to modern times. The Latitudinarian doctrine of miracles was designed to be an accommodation as far as possible to the first problem, and a refutation of the second. Miracles, they said, were worked by God only for the purpose of attesting a revelation from him. Because of the 'standing revelation' of the Scriptures, miracles were no longer necessary, since, as Wilkins said, it is "not reasonable to think that the universal Laws of Nature, by which things are to be regularly guided in their natural course, should frequently or upon every little occasion be violated or disordered."[38] On the whole, the Latitudinarians would have been content to have miracles discontinued with the death of St. John, the last Apostle. Miracles only accompanied new revelations. Their purpose in establishing Christianity having been accomplished, there was no more need for them. Consequently, Roman Catholic claims to continued miracles within its communion were to be attributed to enthusiasm, superstition, priestcraft, or perhaps occasionally to diabolical machinations. And so, as Stillingfleet said, "to ask why God does not continue a gift of

miracles to convince men that [the Scriptures are] true, is to the same purpose as to ask why God does not make a new sun, to satisfy atheists that he made the old."[39]

Men who raised further objections to the truth of the Bible were unreasonable cavillers. That the contents of the original Scriptures have accurately been conveyed to us appeared clearly from the certainty that a book so important could not have been materially corrupted in transmission "without a general conspiracy and agreement, which cannot be, but that it must be generally known."[40] And it was unreasonable to think that God, who cared enough for mankind to give them a revelation, would, in his goodness and providence, let material errors creep into the record of that revelation. As for the authorship of the books of the Bible, no man could prove with mathematical certainty that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, or that St. Matthew wrote the Gospel ascribed to him. But we do know these things by "credible and uncontrolled report,"[41] and that is "as much authority, as for any books in the world, and so much as may satisfy men in other cases, and therefore ought not to be rejected in this."[42] In short, the evidence we have that the Bible is what it purports to be is the same evidence that we have for any other book: "that it has been transmitted down to us by the general and uncontrolled testimony of all ages, and that the authority of it was never questioned in that age wherein it was written, nor invalidated ever since."[43]

The Latitudinarians were not, though perhaps they ought to have been, noticeably troubled by the progress of contemporary critical and literary investigations of the text of the Bible.* About Richard Simon's *Critical History of the Old Testament* (1678), for example, which appeared in English in 1682, and which was a turning-point in the history of Biblical criticism as well as being the most devastating thrust to date of the Counter-Reformation *machine de guerre,* the Latitudinarians said nothing—nothing, at least, that has survived.† Indeed, scarcely any

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* [As early as *Origines Sacrae* (1) (1662), Stillingfleet felt it necessary to dismiss the early Bible criticism of Isaac La Pèyrere, which had appeared in his *Man Before Adam* (1656). In that work, the question is raised, among others, of whether Moses wrote the Pentateuch. Eight years later, Tenison said that Hobbes's questioning of Mosaic authorship was just a repetition of *Man Before Adam* (*The Creed of Mr. Hobbs Examined,* 1670). Thus it would seem that La Peyrère's Bible criticism had already stirred reactions among English theologians before they were aware of Spinoza and Richard Simon.—RHP]

† [A recent study by Gerard Reedy shows that Stillingfleet, for one, was very concerned about both Richard Simon's Biblical criticism and the critical history of the Old Testament as exemplified in Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus.* Stillingfleet owned Simon's *L'histoire critique* in the original French edition of 1680 as well as an English translation of 1682, and a 1670 edition of Spinoza's

contemporary Anglican divine rose to the challenge. As for literary scholarship, collations of Biblical texts made it clearer and clearer as the century progressed that there were a vast number of variant readings in both the Old and New Testaments.* England took an early lead in the collation of texts with Brian Walton's *London Polyglot*, published in 1654–57, but it was not until John Mill's great *Greek New Testament with Variant Readings and Prolegomena*, published in 1707 after having been thirty years in preparation, that the magnitude of the problem became manifest. In 1711, an estimate was made that the *Novum Testamentum Millii* showed 30,000 variant readings. The usual reaction to this fact was that of the classicist Richard Bentley, who observed that even if the 30,000 variants were put into the hand of a knave or a fool, "yet with the most sinistrous and absurd choice, he shall not extinguish the light of any one chapter; nor so disguise Christianity, but that every feature of it will still be the same." This is what Mill himself said, and it was essentially the argument that Tillotson and the other Latitudinarians had advanced a generation before, only against less specific and extensive evidence. Bentley additionally urged that "If the like scrupulousness was observed in registering the smallest changes in profane authors, as it allowed, nay required in sacred; the now formidable number of 30,000 would appear a very trifle." Bentley's comments were occasioned by the publication of Anthony Collins's *Discourse of Free-Thinking* (1713), which contended that Mill's work had made the text of Scripture "precarious" as a rule of faith. Bentley's refutation of Collins provided the main basis for a confutation of the *Discourse* by Benjamin Ibbot, librarian and chaplain to Archbishop Tenison. Tenison proposed Ibbot to answer Collins in the Boyle Lectures of 1713 and 1714, and it is clear that Tenison, and with him, Lloyd, the most competent exegete among the

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Tractatus. He referred critically to these works in a sermon delivered early in 1683. The sermon had remained unpublished until Reedy's study, in which the passages that refer to the two works are included.[44] Moreover, Isaac Vossius (1618-89), who was canon of Windsor for the last two decades of his life, was engaged in an active controversy with Simon. And in 1690, Isaac Newton, when preparing his anti-Trinitarian criticism for publication, was advised by Locke—who was passing on the suggestion of Jean LeClerc—to study the work of Richard Simon, which he did.[45] All of these details would indicate that there was general concern about the critical and literary investigations of the text of the Bible, and that at least some were aware of and participated in the Latitudinarians' concern.—RHP]

* [Burnet takes seriously the issue of the accuracy of the biblical text in his *Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England* (1699), and is willing to concede that there are problems that cannot be resolved. Nonetheless he holds that the message of the Bible has been preserved, and that essentially it is a moral message that transcends the minutiae of text.—RHP]

Latitudinarians, were in essential agreement with Mill and Bentley as to the significance of Mill's variants.[46*]

And so with the Latitudinarians the whole basis for belief in the Christian revelation was reduced to this: "We believe the doctrine of Christian religion, because it is revealed by God; we believe it to be revealed by God, because it was confirmed by unquestionable miracles; we believe such miracles were wrought because we have as great assurance of this, as any matter of fact, at such a distance from the time it was done, is capable of."[47] One must attend closely to what they have done here. They have proved Christianity to be of infallible truth because of its divine authority. But the existence of God is an inference from what Wilkins called the "mixed" evidence of experience, and so possesses only "moral certainty." Further, the proof of that divine authority they have resolved into the miracles of the New Testament. Miracles are a question of sense-perception, and can therefore possess "physical certainty." But this "physical certainty" the Latitudinarians must validate on the basis of testimony, to which only "moral certainty" can attach. It is true that Christianity could not be demonstrated to a seventeenth-century Englishman by the evidence of sense, or by a mathematical demonstration; and it is true also that the Latitudinarians insisted that the best evidence of which a thing is capable is sufficient in practice to give "undoubted assurance" of that thing. Consequently, they could not genuinely see the force of any complaint against such a use of the concept of moral certainty. To one such objection, Fowler's reply was one of righteous indignation:

> What a fault *that* is! Our certainty . . . may be perfectly undoubted, as moral as it is. And I fear not to declare, that I do not desire to be more undoubtedly assured that there were such persons as our Saviour and his Apostles, that they performed such works, and preached such doctrines as we have on record; and that the books we call canonical, were written by those whose names they bear, than I have cause to be and am that there were such great conquerors as Alexander and Julius Caesar . . . but for all that my certainty of these things can be no more than moral; yet I do notwithstanding no more doubt of them, than I do of those things that are plainly objected to my senses . . . and I should be laughed at as an arrant fool, if I did.[48]

But all this cannot disguise the fact that the Latitudinarians admittedly accorded to Christianity a certainty that was lower than that attaching to the evidence of the senses or of mathematical demonstration, and that if

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* [Bentley's patron, Sir Isaac Newton, took the variants much more seriously and believed no accurate text existed except for the Book of Revelation, though he felt that for all the textual problems it was still possible to find the central message, namely, that which appears in Daniel and in Revelation.—RHP]

the phrase "moral certainty" or its equivalents, ("undoubted assurance," "indubitable certainty") are put aside for a moment, what they were really saying is that Christianity is true beyond any reasonable doubt, or, in other words, that it is "highly probable." And similarly, they accorded to the facts of the Christian revelation an epistemological status which, in the final analysis, is not much different from that which they accorded to the contents of any reliable historical account of the past.

But is not faith, as St. Thomas said, *supplementum sensuum defectui*? Are there no suprarational motives of credibility which can induce a man to embrace the truths of Christianity with an assent that transcends that of moral certainty? With the Latitudinarians, when all is said and done, there were not. It is true that they agreed with Tillotson that faith in the Scriptures "does [not] become an abiding and effectual persuasion in any person, without the special operation of the Holy Ghost."[49] But he was not referring to "faith" as a cognitive act, but as a practical one: when he said that the Holy Ghost conveys an "abiding and effectual persuasion" he meant the "effect of [faith] is upon the will; by which it works upon the affections and the life."[50] Furthermore, this special operation of the Holy Ghost did not take place until after assent had been made to the proposition that the Scriptures were a divine revelation, an assent which must be made, as we have seen, on purely rational grounds. Any assistance that the Holy Ghost gave to a man in the process of this assent, the Latitudinarians said, must be understood as being directed strictly to his rational faculties. "The external and rational motives of credibility," Fowler declared, "are as sufficient to give unprejudiced persons undoubted belief in the truth of our religion as any rational arguments are to persuade a man of the truth of anything he desires satisfaction concerning."[51] Such terms as "the grace of God" or "the testimony of the Spirit" bear careful watching when the Latitudinarians use them. They did not mean any suprarational motives of credibility, or divine assistance in the traditional sense of the word "grace." Nor, Tillotson said, did they mean "that the Spirit of God does in the work of faith, raise and elevate our understandings above their natural pitch." What the Holy Ghost did do was sometimes to recall to men's minds the evidence for Christianity that they had read in the Bible; sometimes to hold "our minds intent upon this evidence, till it has wrought its effect upon us"; and most important, to assist men to conquer the lusts and passions which prejudiced them against that evidence.[52]

What the Latitudinarians usually meant by "grace" was explained by Fowler, who identified it with (1) the magnanimous gift of God to men of reason, combined with (2) the reasonableness of the doctrines revealed in the Bible.[53] Sometimes, as with Glanvill, "grace" could simply be the

Bible itself. As he put it, speaking of the beliefs of the Latitudinarian Anti-fanites, "there is a general grace which [has] appeared unto all men, in the light of reason, the laws written upon our hearts, and common aids of the Spirit." These "common aids of the Spirit" seem to resolve themselves into the ordinary ratiocinative abilities of mankind. For Christians, he said, there was superadded "a grace more special," appertaining to them alone, and that was the Bible. By this scheme, "grace" has nothing individual or subjective about it. As Glanvill said, God "is no fond respecter of persons."[54]

By the same token, the Latitudinarians did not accord any extrarational or suprarational status to the "testimony of the Spirit"; they identified it with the already-accomplished miracles of the New Testament which had certified the truth of the Christian religion. The entire structure of their rational psychology, as well as their hatred and fear of enthusiasm, led them to reject the idea of anything like "an internal testimony, or a secret powerful persuasion wrought immediately, in the souls of men, by the Holy Ghost." Fowler disposed of such a notion by four arguments. First he asserted that if it were true, then the devils would be unbelievers, for they are deprived of the Holy Ghost; but they are not unbelievers, as the Scriptures prove; therefore the internal operation of the Holy Ghost is unnecessary for belief in Christianity. Secondly, he said that this notion seemed to assert that Christ and the Apostles might have omitted their miracles, for the immediate internal operation of the Holy Ghost would make miracles unnecessary as evidence of the truth of the Christian religion; but it was only reasonable to think that those miracles had had a necessary purpose. Thirdly, he accused the supporters of such an idea of being as illogical as Roman Catholics, who proved the Bible by the Church and the Church by the Bible: it was just as foolish, he said, to prove the Scriptures by the testimony of the Holy Ghost, and the existence of the Holy Ghost by the Scriptures. Finally, he observed that if this proposition were true, then "there is nothing to be done for the conviction of infidels; for this internal testimony can be an argument to none but those that have had it."[55] Fowler's arguments dramatically illustrate the thoroughly rational nature of the Latitudinarians' idea of "faith." Nowhere does the machine-like quality of their notion of the human mind appear so strikingly as in their theory of grace. The mind, in their scheme, can attain certainty, even of supernatural revelation, only in one way: by the automatic process of almost passive assent, solely to objective, external, and rational evidence.

Since the road to belief in revelation was a rational one, it followed that revelation could not contradict reason. With the Latitudinarians, as one might expect, the chief confirmation of the truth of Christianity was its

conformity to the dictates of natural religion, that is, of reason. So insistently did they stress the agreement of natural and revealed religion that they were sometimes charged with attempting to equate the two. Before doing so, Fowler impressively vowed that he would "impose an eternal silence upon my tongue, and pluck it out by the roots too"; but, he said, even though Christianity had superadded some things to natural religion, "the similarity of it to the precepts of natural religion are [*sic*] a high commendation."[56] It was not just a commendation, it was a necessity. As Burnet wrote, "the first great argument" for Christianity was "the purity of the doctrine, and the holiness of its precepts, which are all so congruous to the common impressions of nature and reason; and this must prove . . . that [Christ's] miracles were true ones, and not wrought by the Prince of Devils, since his doctrine is opposite and destructive of his interest and kingdom."[57] Tillotson put it more specifically:

> Reason is the faculty whereby revelations are to be discerned. . . . For all revelation from God supposes us to be men, and to be endued with reason; and therefore it does not create any new faculties in us, but propounds new objects to that faculty which was in us before. Whatever doctrines God reveals to men are propounded to their understandings, and by this faculty we are to examine all doctrines which pretend to be from God, and upon examination to judge whether there be reason to receive them as divine, or to reject them as impostures.[58]

All revelation was therefore to be tested by the principles of natural religion, "because we have no other way to judge what is worthy of God, and credible to be revealed by him, and what not, but the natural notions we have of God and of his essential perfections: which, because we know him to be immutable, we have reason to believe he will never contradict. And by these principles likewise, we are to interpret what God has revealed. . . ."[59] There is, of course, an insuperable difficulty in this line of argument. No revealed doctrine was to be believed without the evidence of miracles wrought in confirmation of it; but no miracle was to be received as evidence unless the miracle itself was confirmed by the reasonableness of the doctrine. The Latitudinarians suggest no way of escape from this logical dilemma; in fact, there is no evidence that they were aware of its existence.

While revealed doctrines could not be contrary to reason, they could be *above* reason. As Burnet said of the Trinity:

> We cannot be bound to believe anything that contradicts our reasons; for the evidence of reason, as well as that of sense, is the voice of God to us. But as great difference is to be made, between a feeble evidence that sense gives us of an object that is at a distance from us, or that appears to us through a false medium; such as a concave or a convex-glass; and the full evidence of an object that is before us, and that is clearly apprehended by us: So there is a

> great difference to be made, between our reasonings upon difficulties that we can neither understand nor resolve, and our reasonings upon clear principles. The one may be false, and the other must be true: We are sure that a thing cannot be one and three in the same respect; our reason assures us of this, and we do and must believe it; but we know that in different respects, the same thing may be one and three. And since we cannot know all the possibilities of those different respects, we must believe upon the authority of God revealing it that the same thing is both *one* and *three*; though if a revelation should affirm that the same thing were *one* and *three* in the same respect, we should not, and indeed could not believe it.[60]

Fowler proposed an even more ingeniously "reasonable" solution of the problem of revealed doctrines which "exceed our apprehensions." Even the most mysterious of them, he said, appear to be "gratifications of the natural propensions of mankind," so that they were not only not contrary to reason, but eminently "suitable" to it. Learned heathen, he explained, had held notions analogous to those of the Trinity, the Virgin Birth, the Vicarious Atonement, and the Mediatorship of Christ. They might have received some of them from the Jews, he said, but even so, that they were "so tenacious of some, and so readily catching at others upon the first news of them" demonstrated the inherent suitability of such doctrine to human reason.[61]*

The Latitudinarians' methodology potentially involved here a grave danger for Christianity. They said that even if a divine revelation asserted something contrary to reason, it ought not—could not—be believed. Tillotson illustrated this assertion by his refutation of the doctrine of transubstantiation.† That doctrine, he thought, overthrew the bases of all religious certainty, because if a man cannot believe the evidence of his own eyes, then no man can believe the evidence of miracles. Consequently, even if transubstantiation were as clearly expounded in the New Testament as it was in the decrees of the Council of Trent, "by what clearer evidence or stronger argument could any man prove to me that such words were in the Bible, that I can prove to him that bread and wine after consecration are bread and wine still?"[63] Besides, the certainty arising from testimony was weaker than that arising from sense perception, and as Tillotson said elsewhere, evidence for a revelation must be stronger and clearer than evidence against it, "because all assent is grounded upon evidence, and the strongest clearest evidence always car-

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* [The view that the essential Christian doctrines are to be found in ancient Judaism and the beliefs of pagans was put forth by Gerard Vossius (1577–1649) and by Ralph Cudworth. They claimed to have found a primeval form of the doctrine of the Trinity in the earliest theological views of mankind.[62]—RHP]

† [His refutation is similar to that offered by some seventeenth-century French Protestants such as Jean La Placette (1639–1718).—RHP]

ries it."[64] Depending on one's conception of the nature of evidence, this argument can be used to overthrow absolutely any doctrine of revealed Christianity. But of this difficulty, which was to receive its classic treatment in Hume's essay "Of Miracles" (1748), the Latitudinarians were completely unaware; they felt no uneasiness in holding in essential integrity the fundamental doctrines historically associated with Christian belief, such as, for example, those in the Nicene Creed.

Those fundamental doctrines, as we have seen, the Latitudinarians thought were easily accessible in the Scriptures. They held the traditional Protestant doctrine that each man might search the Scriptures for himself, not just because they thought that the Bible itself enjoined this liberty, but also because "the Scripture does sufficiently interpret itself, that is, is plain to all capacities, in things necessary to be believed and practiced."[65] St. Chrysostom and St. Augustine could be quoted on the plainness of the Bible, but the Latitudinarians derived the principle more immediately from the Cambridge Platonists, from the Dutch Arminians,* especially Simon Episcopius whom "they read much,"[67] and from William Chillingworth, whom they read even more. God would not make anything necessary for belief that he did not also make plain; and it is man's fault if he does not believe what has been revealed to him so clearly. In matters not plain (and therefore indifferent to salvation), men should have recourse to teachers learned in Christian doctrine, because "the knowledge of revealed religion is not a thing born with us . . . but is to be learned as other things are."[68] But, as Tenison observed, though "in finding out the Scriptures the Church gives [men] help . . . it does not by its authority obtrude the sense upon them."[69] It was in non-essentials that the Latitudinarians considered the Church's authority important, but for the sake of public peace and convenience, and not because the Church had a divinely-commissioned *magisterium* in such matters.

In summary, in the theology of the Latitudinarians, "reason" and "faith" differed only in respect of their objects. Reason was the process of assent to evidences of various types, and the attainment of the degrees of certainty implicit in those evidences. It had as its objects the things of this world and the principles of natural religion. Faith was exactly the same thing, excepting that it had as its object the content of the divine revelation contained in the Bible. The attainment of faith, or persuasion of the truth of the divine revelation contained in the Scriptures, was a rational

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* [The correspondence of Philip van Limborch (1633–1712) in the University of Amsterdam Library indicates there was continuous contact between him, the Cambridge Platonists, and such English clergymen as Burnet, Lloyd, Stillingfleet, and Tillotson. The edition of Locke's letters (still to be completed) shows how much the philosopher learned from the Dutch Arminians.[66]—RHP]

process throughout. Reason was to judge of a revelation whether it was a revelation, and the contents of the revelation were to be interpreted by reason. No suprarational or extrarational motives of credibility were necessary for the attainment of a divine faith: neither the special assistance of the Holy Ghost, nor ecclesiastical authority or tradition, nor the operation of the human will. In the Latitudinarian system, the certainty attaching to the truths of Christianity was that of "moral certainty," which was lower than "physical certainty" or "mathematical certainty." But moral certainty arose from the best evidence of which Christianity was capable. Only an "unreasonable" man would require more.

This, then, was the system of faith and reason that the Latitudinarians advanced as an impregnable buttress of Protestantism. They thought that it was, for they had contrived it so to be, an instrument well-suited to repulse the foes who clamored outside the walls of the Church of England. The most insidious enemies, the Counter-Reformation apologists who manned the *machine de guerre,* were met with a rational defense of Protestantism which vindicated the integrity of the Bible as a rule of faith, and answered *du haut en bas* any infallibilist claims made for the Church of Rome. The arguments which were aimed against the "implicit faith" of the *machine de guerre* were intended also to serve against enthusiasm. Adherents of both claimed divine assistance (though of completely different sorts) in reaching their different versions of Christianity; to both camps the Latitudinarians replied that because of the nature of reason, of evidence, of faith, of the human mind itself, such assertions were untenable, and would become tenable only in the unlikely eventuality of miracles being worked to certify them.

Similarly, the Latitudinarian system was a gauntlet thrown in the face of "atheism." Every tactic of Hobbism was met by a counter-tactic designed to show that to deny natural and revealed religion was either to involve oneself in absurdities, or else to overthrow the very foundations of all knowledge and certainty. The Deist, who believed in a providential God, was confronted with an elaborate structure designed to prove that if there was a God, then it was necessary and reasonable to believe that what He said in the Scriptures was true. The entire construct of the Latitudinarian theology was, in fact, an experiment in triumphant confirmation of Sprat's assertion that reason and the Church of England were intimate and unconquerable allies, to which seventeenth-century intellectuals might safely turn in their quest for religious certainty. Here was indeed a theology for the times. But like everything "modern," it had its roots in the past.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE BACKGROUND OF THE LATITUDINARIAN SYSTEM

One Restoration Catholic controversialist, more perspicacious than many of his co-religionists, observed in the course of a debate with Tenison that the writings of William Chillingworth were the "fountainhead" of the rational theology of the Latitudinarians.[1] This connection between Chillingworth and Latitudinarianism has seldom been noticed; though sometimes alluded to by modern historians, it has never been systematically explored.[2] Yet though the Latitudinarians were to one degree or another affiliated with the traditions of Thomistic scholasticism, of the rational Anglicanism of Hooker and Laud, of Dutch Arminianism and Cambridge Platonism, it was with Chillingworth that their system originated, and one cannot understand it without examining him.

The name of Chillingworth is inseparable from what Clarendon called the "*convivium theologicum*" of Lucius Cary, second Viscount Falkland, at Great Tew in Oxfordshire, about twenty miles from the University. According to Clarendon's description of Falkland's house, it

> looked like the University itself, by the company that was always found there. There were Dr. Sheldon, Dr. Morley, Dr. Hammond, Dr. Earles, Mr. Chillingworth, and indeed all men of eminent parts and faculties in Oxford, besides those who resorted thither from London, who all found their lodgings there as ready as in their colleges, nor did the Lord of the house know of their coming or going, nor who were in the house, till he came to dinner or supper, where all still met, otherwise there was no troublesome ceremony or constraint to forbid men to come to the house, or to make them weary of staying there; so that many came thither to study in a better air, finding all the books they could desire in his library, and all the persons together, whose company they could wish, and not find in any other society.[3]

There during the vicissitudes of the 1630s some of the finest minds in England could find serenity in the "better air" of the ideals of Falkland's beloved Erasmus and Acontius.[4] The characteristic thought of his circle was consciously and directly in the tradition of sixteenth-century Christian Humanism, with its stress on free will, theological minimalism, charity in inessentials, and a concern for morality above credal speculation. As a consequence of this complex of attitudes, Falkland's group stressed the use of reason in religion: for any theory of cooperative grace must assign importance to a man's reason, and, in Protestantism, to his private judgment; irenic gestures must always come in rational guise; and it implies a high estimation of the intellect to give it the duty of dis-

tinguishing essentials from accidentals in religion. But more than this, at Great Tew the tradition of Erasmian, or northern, Humanism merged with the more rationalistic tradition of Italian Humanism by way of influence from Socinianism. Socinianism, named for its founders, Lelio Francesco Maria Sozzini (1525–1562), and Fausto Paolo Sozzini (1539–1604), was an amalgam *par excellence* of Renaissance rationalism and the Protestant notion of *sola Scripture*. Falkland's circle were not Socinians in their Trinitarianism, but the nature of the emphatic stress that Chillingworth, Henry Hammond, John Hales, and Falkland himself placed on the role of reason in religion suggests the influence of Socinian literature, of which, in fact, there can be no doubt.[5] Additionally, the views of Falkland's group were reinforced and sometimes refined by contact with Dutch Arminianism. The Dutch Arminians, or Remonstrants, took their name from their leader Jacobus Arminius (1560–1609), and were, like the group at Great Tew, grounded in the principles of Erasmian Humanism. They rejected the doctrine of absolute reprobation, proposing soteriological notions not dissimilar to those of Falkland's group. Arminianism was condemned as heresy in 1618 at the Synod of Dort, an international council of Calvinist divines, which reaffirmed without compromise the extreme Calvinist doctrines of the total depravity of human nature and of salvation limited to the elect by the arbitrary operation of God's irresistible grace. Just as the doctrines of the Synod of Dort inevitably minimalized the role of reason in religion, so a theology of free will tends to emphasize it; and with the most famous of the Remonstrants, Hugo Grotius (1583–1645), Arminianism began to take a pronouncedly rationalistic turn which was intensified among the second generation of Remonstrants such as Philippus van Limborch and Jean LeClerc, whose theology was remarkably like Latitudinarianism. The main point of contact between Dutch Arminianism and Falkland's circle was chiefly by way of Grotius. His reputation, which was strongest in England of all the countries of Europe, was no place higher than at Great Tew. Falkland called Grotius, "our age's wonder," and of his *De Veritate religionis Christianae*, upon which Grotius's fame as a Christian apologist chiefly rests, Falkland wrote,

> Now Thames, with Ganges, may thy labors praise,
> Which there breed faith, and here devotion raise.[6]

It was, as we shall see, for the *De Veritate religionis Christianae* that the circle at Great Tew were most grateful to the sage of Holland.* The chief

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* [Grotius fled to Paris in 1621, where during the last decade of his life he served as Sweden's ambassador to the French court. He lived in Paris until his death in

formulator of the rational religion characteristic of Latitudinarianism was William Chillingworth. It was elicited from him, and advocated by Falkland and Henry Hammond, directly in response to the *machine de guerre*.

As a young man, Chillingworth, a godson of Laud, had been converted to Roman Catholicism by the infallibilist arguments of the Jesuit Fisher.[7] In about 1630, he went abroad to study at the Jesuit seminary at Douai. There his own thinking and his correspondence with his godfather gave him what he thought were decisive answers against the Romanist claim to infallibility, and in 1631, he returned to England. He retired almost immediately to Great Tew, and until the outbreak of civil war, was in almost continuous residence there. A Catholic no longer, he was not yet a Protestant again; Clarendon, who knew him well at Great Tew, observed in him "such an irresolution and habit of doubting, that by degrees he grew confident of nothing, and a sceptic at least in the greatest mysteries of faith."[8*] Chillingworth, in fact, was one of the first to experience the danger inherent in the use of the *machine de guerre*, that it could corrode Protestant certainty without substituting Catholic certainty. Chillingworth did not enjoy this state of religious doubt; "his only unhappiness," Clarendon wrote, "proceeded from his sleeping too little, and thinking too much, which sometimes threw him into violent fevers."[9] Chillingworth's thoughts, however, gradually crystallized into a system which he believed provided satisfactory grounds for certainty in religion. That system he expounded in his famous book *The Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation*, written at Great Tew between 1634 and 1636, and published in 1638 in refutation of the infallibilist arguments of the Jesuit Edward Knott. It will become apparent that the influence of *The Religion of Protestants* on the Latitudinarians was perhaps greater than that of any other book, the Bible only excepted.

Reason—a man's own reason—Chillingworth said, was the only means to religious certainty. "You that would not have men follow their reason," he asked, "what would you have them follow?"[10] "For," he said, "the evidence of the thing assented to, be it more or less, is the reason and cause of the assent in the understanding."[11] In order to assess what Chillingworth meant by "reason," it is important to remember that he started from what was almost certainly a position of unbelief in the truth of the Christian religion. The scholastic theologians, Hooker and the Laudians, and the Cambridge Platonists had all, in effect, assumed the truth of Christianity when they asserted the complementary qualities of

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1645, becoming part of the intellectual circles around Father Mersenne, Herbert of Cherbury, Gassendi, and , later, Hobbes and the Royalist exiles.—RHP]

* [In his *Lives of Eminent Men*, Aubrey describes Chillingworth as reading Sextus Empiricus every day, if only to arm himself against dogmatic thinkers.—RHP]

"faith" and "reason." Chillingworth, having been exposed to the warring claims of different religious truths, and to the same enlarged experience of non-Christians that had led Lord Herbert to the conclusions of his *De Veritate*, had learned to distrust assertions of religious truth which seemed to have authority, tradition, custom, or education as even partial justifications. It is well known that the meaning of the word "reason" changed during the seventeenth century as the result of a complex of causes, chief among them the epistemological conflicts arising from the Reformation, voyages of discovery and exploration, and the rise of science.[12] What the scholastics, the Laudians, and the Cambridge Platonists meant by "reason" in religion included the operation of all the cognitive faculties of man: not just the intellect, but intuition, imagination, and feeling as well. All these faculties operated by a process that was essentially analogical, and proceeded on assumptions which included the postulates of "faith." "Reason," thus conceived, was an admirable instrument for apprehending the universe as it had been described by philosophers and theologians before the scientific revolution: a richly-variegated organic whole, pervaded throughout by the life-giving pulse of divine reason, divine will, and divine grace. But this "reason" tended to assert the religious truths that it purported to certify; and inasmuch as it included the functioning of all aspects of the human personality acting in harmony, not just the intellect alone, it contained elements of subjectivity.

What Chillingworth required, however, was a "reason" in religion that would operate *ab initio*, one that was thoroughly "objective" and "universal." That is, he needed a "reason" which could not be accused of harboring any tinctures of cultural particularism or religious prejudice, a "reason" that would be equally convincing to a Catholic or a Protestant, a Moslem or a Buddhist, a "reason," in short, which operated on a mathematical model from unquestionable external evidence. In other words, he needed more or less what Locke would have understood by "reason," rather than what Hooker would have understood by it.[13] And it was such a "reason" that his *Religion of Protestants* proposed.

The immediate inspiration for Chillingworth's system seems to have been Grotius's *De Veritate religionis Christianae*: so much was Chillingworth impressed by that book that during the winter of 1631–32, when his religious doubts reached their height, he had several times entertained the idea of resolving them by crossing the Channel to talk to Grotius. Grotius composed the *De Veritate religionis Christianae* first in Dutch verse between 1619 and 1621 at the Castle of Louvestein in South Holland where he had been imprisoned by the States General as an

Arminian heretic.* He published the poem in 1622, and between 1627 and 1640 appeared four editions of its translation into Latin prose. The Latin text was widely translated, and enjoyed the applause of all Europe, but seems to have been especially popular in England. There were three seventeenth-century English translations of *De Veritate*, the third by the Latitudinarian Simon Patrick, published in 1680.

Grotius's *De Veritate religionis Christianae* and Lord Herbert's *De Veritate* obviously reached different conclusions, but the two books were inspired by essentially the same problem. Lord Herbert concluded from the vast multiplicity of the world's religions that Christianity was but one parochial manifestation of a universal natural religion; Grotius, facing the same issue, concluded that Christianity was the true religion because it was demonstrably more reasonable and ethically better than any other religion. His arguments need not detain us: we have already met them in the main points that the Latitudinarians were later to make in their exposition of the reasonableness of Christianity. They frequently cited it, in fact, and Stillingfleet stated that he had found it useful in the composition of his *Origines Sacrae*. But even when it was first published, Grotius's book had no elements of originality. Before he composed it, he had read widely in Christian apologetics; he admitted special influence from Raymond de Sebonde's *Theologia Naturalis* (1484), Luis Vives's *De Veritate Christiana* (1580), and Philippe du Plessis-Mornay's *De Veritate religionis Christianae* (1580). Grotius's work, in arrangement and argument, shows a striking similarity to Mornay's book, and in fact was little more than a summary of it. Mornay and Grotius were beneficiaries of an already well-established tradition of defense of Christianity on the basis of the natural evidences of its truth, beginning as early as the Patristic period, and in the Middle Ages culminating in Aquinas's *Summa Contra Gentiles*. The fifteenth century saw the publication of a large number of "evidence" works, particularly by Italians like Ficino, Aeneas Sylvius, Mirandola the younger, and Savonarola, who wanted to defend Christianity against pagan philosophies revived during the Renaissance. These works advanced essentially the same defenses that Grotius did, arguing with various definitions of "reason" from what were considered objective evidences: evidences of prophecies and miracles, evidences of the moral excellence of Christ's teachings, evidences of the sincerity and sanctity of the Apostles, and therefore of the authenticity of the New Testament; evidence from the miraculous propagation of Christianity;

* [Grotius conceived the work as one for Dutch sailors, to be read as they travelled around the world. It was intended, first, to enhance their own understanding of the peoples they met in their travels, and, second, to provide them with concepts to expound to the natives they met.—RHP]

and evidence of Christianity's superiority when compared to non-Christian religions. The Latitudinarians were clearly in this apologetical tradition of Christian "evidences."

What needs explanation is the fact that Grotius's *De Veritate* quickly surpassed all other such works in influence, prestige and staying power. For this there appear to have been several reasons. First, it was short and simple. Again, it carried the name of a man of massive international reputation. More important, it did not attempt too much; it did not clearly assert the deity of Jesus, and the Trinity was not mentioned. And because it did not attempt too much, it was admirably suited to be used in the war against unbelief in the later seventeenth century. Grotius had originally written the *De Veritate* to convert infidels abroad. It retained its popularity in Europe because it could profitably be used to reconvert infidels at home: the reclaiming of unbelievers was Patrick's stated motive for translating it.

The reclaiming of Chillingworth, or at least the settling of his doubts, seems in fact to have been the effect of his study of the *De Veritate religionis Christianae*. For Chillingworth, the most important part of the work was the last chapter of Book II, in which Grotius discussed the case of a person who might find the usual demonstrations of Christianity to be inadequate, and who demanded "more forcible" proof of its truth. Chillingworth quoted that passage at length, making it an essential part of his *Religion of Protestants;* the elaborations and refinements that Chillingworth made upon it constitute the core of the characteristic rational theology of Great Tew and of the Latitudinarians.

In that passage, Grotius referred the doubter to a consideration of the nature of evidence itself. "As there are variety of things which are true," he wrote, "so are there divers ways of proving or manifesting the truth." Mathematics, physics, and ethics all had their various proofs, and there was yet another kind of proof, which related to matters of fact, for which the proper evidence was that of testimony. The evidence of testimony was not, Grotius admitted, so conclusive as that of mathematics or physics; but men had to rest content with testimony as proof of historical events, because no other sort of evidence could apply to them. Christianity, being an historical matter of fact, had to be proved by evidence which ultimately resolved itself into that of testimony: the testimony of eye-witnesses of Christ's miracles, and the testimony also of "those companies and congregations of Christians, which are anywhere to be found; where of, doubtless, there was some cause." It was "the pleasure of Almighty God," he added, "that those things, which he would have us to believe (so that the very belief thereof may be imputed to us for obedience), should not so evidently appear, as those things which are appre-

hended by sense, and plain demonstration, but only be so far forth revealed as may beget faith, and a persuasion thereof, in the hearts and minds of such as are not obstinate."[14]

All this was a stock argument of apologetics of Christian evidences, derived ultimately from Aristotle's *Ethics*.[15] Chillingworth, however, gave it a novel twist, mostly by a relentless exploration of all its implications. By this argument, sense perception gave "physical certainty"; mathematical demonstrations gave "mathematical certainty"; demonstrations from first principles gave "metaphysical certainty"; but testimony, an inferior kind of evidence, could produce even in religion only an inferior kind of certainty called "faith." Chillingworth concluded from this that religious "faith" was less than "knowledge." "Faith," he wrote, "is not knowledge, no more than three is four, but eminently contained in it, so that he that knows believes, and something more; but he that believes, many times does not know, nay, if he does barely and merely believe, he does never know. . . ."[16] The kind of certainty that attached to the "faith" which rose from the evidence of testimony was what Chillingworth called "moral certainty."[17]

The basis for a Christian faith, Chillingworth said, was the Bible, and the Bible only. For his part, he wrote, after long and impartial search for a ground of religious certainty, he could find no "rest for the sole of my foot but upon this rock only." Popes had contradicted popes, councils had contradicted councils, theologians had disagreed with each other throughout the history of Christianity. "In a word," he concluded, "there is no sufficient certainty but of Scripture only, for any considering man to build upon." He would, he said, subscribe *ex animo* to anything which could clearly be shown to be proposed for belief by the Bible, even if it seemed incomprehensible to human reason, for he knew that "no demonstration can be stronger than this—God has said so, therefore it is true."[18]

That what God said was true, he thought was a self-evident proposition, and therefore "absolutely certain." But, he added, "of this hypothesis—that all the articles of our faith were revealed by God—we cannot ordinarily have any rational and acquired certainty, more than moral, founded upon these considerations":

> First, That the goodness of the precepts of Christianity, and the greatness of the promises of it, shows it, of all other religions, most likely to come from the Fountain of Goodness. And then, that a constant, famous, and very general tradition, so credible, that no wise man doubts of any other which has but the fortieth part of the credibility of this: such and so credible a tradition tells us, that God himself has set his hand and seal to the truth of this doctrine, by doing great, and glorious, and frequent miracles in confirmation of it.[19]

Our faith, Chillingworth added, was "an assent to this conclusion, that the doctrine of Christianity is true." The truth of Christianity was deduced from the "metaphysically" or "absolutely" certain proposition of God's veracity, together with the "moral certainty" that the Bible contains God's word. This deduction of the truth of Christianity, in turn, could be no more certain than the weaker of the two certainties, the one "absolute," the other "moral." For as Chillingworth said, "the conclusion always follows the worser part . . . and must be negative, particular, contingent, or but morally certain, if any of the propositions, from whence it is derived, be so: neither can we be certain of it in the highest degree, unless we be thus certain of all the principles whereon which it is grounded."[20] In short, in the ordinary course of things, it was impossible for a man to be certain of the truth of Christianity "in the highest degree," because it rested on the evidence of the testimony contained in the Bible, and testimony could produce only "moral certainty."

This concept of "moral certainty," as we have seen, was the keystone of the Latitudinarians' rational theology, and their use of the term is a clear signal of Chillingworth's profound influence upon them.[21] Chillingworth, and Falkland and Hammond following him, appear to have been the first Christian apologists to employ the notion of "moral certainty" in this way.* The term had, to be sure, existed before Chillingworth, and had various significations, all verging toward the one Descartes gave it, "a certainty sufficient for the conduct of life."[22] But as the term had been employed by medieval theologians and subsequent religious writers, it had referred to the order of natural knowledge, or to the realm of ethics and behavior, not to the supernatural order of Christian assent. For example, if one's betrothed affirmed that she had not previously been married, and she usually told the truth, then one had "moral certainty" that marriage to her would not involve bigamy; or if one had never seen India, but had reliable reports of its existence, then one was justified on the "moral certainty" that India existed.[23] In a sense, then, Chillingworth's "moral certainty" of the truth of Christianity was an equivalent of Pascal's wager: the evidence for Christianity was not conclusive, but it was highly probable, and the stakes involved made it advisable to *act as if* it were mathematically or metaphysically certain. It was perhaps natural that the thinkers at Great Tew, who stressed Christian action above religious speculation, should speak of assent to Christianity in terms of the behavior that followed from that assent. And it might be expected that Chillingworth, who wanted to admit no motives of credibility into his re-

* [Something like the concept appears in Sebastian Castellio's *De Arte Dubitandi* (1563). The work existed in manuscript in the papers of the Dutch Arminians, and was probably known to Grotius.—RHP]

ligious system which were not objectively verifiable, should apply a notion belonging to the realm of natural reason to the realm of assent to the supernatural revelation of Christianity. But in doing so, he accomplished what was in effect a revolution in theology.*

The radical nature of this proto-Latitudinarian system of faith and reason can be better realized if it is compared to that of two of the most important anchors and standards of Anglican orthodoxy, Richard Hooker and William Laud. The uncompromising predestinarian theology of Dort, with its accompanying distrust of the use of reason in religion, was, *mutatis mutandis*, the theology of the generality of Anglican divines during the reigns of Elizabeth I and the earlier Stuarts. But the turn of the century saw the appearance within the English Church of the so-called "New School," which rejected the doctrine of absolute reprobation, and which also was characterized by a revival of Catholic tendencies in liturgy and ecclesiology. The chief members of the New School were Lancelot Andrewes (1555–1626), Jeremy Taylor (1613–77), Richard Montagu (1577–1641), John Cosin (1594–1672), and George Mountain (1568–1628). Because of the similarity of their doctrine of grace to that of the Dutch Remonstrants, they quickly became known as "Arminians," and later as "Laudians," after William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury and leader of the New School from 1633 until his execution in 1637.[25] Though the Remonstrant movement greatly influenced the New School by way of reinforcement, it was not merely an English extension of Dutch Arminianism, but essentially an independent though parallel movement. Members of the New School were a distinct minority in the Anglican clergy of the earlier Stuarts, but the Church that was restored with Charles II was almost entirely Laudian in outlook and doctrine,[26] and the Latitudinarians, like the rest of the Restoration clergy, were all more or less Arminians. As a consequence of their rejection of Calvinist predestinarianism, and because of their need to defend the Church of England against the infallibilism of the papists and against what Hooker called the "meeseemeth" of the presbytery, the Laudians proposed a theology which assigned a weighty role to reason in religion. In their rational theology, as well as in their ecclesiology and liturgics, they were much influenced by the writings of Hooker, whose thought, in turn, was grounded in the tradition of Thomistic scholasticism.[27] Between Hooker

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* [Van Leeuwen places Chillingworth in the history of modern scepticism and shows that his theory of moral certainty began the tradition of English epistemology posing limited certitude as a way of dealing with sceptical challenges.[24] In so doing, Chillingworth accomplished what was a revolution in philosophy as well, leading up to the Restoration and the theory of John Locke. —RHP]

and Laudians there were differences, particularly on matters of church government and worship. But we are here interested in their systems of faith and reason, which were sufficiently similar to be discussed together. It may safely be said that the majority of the Restoration Anglican clergy held a theory of the relation of reason to faith similar in outline to that advanced by Laud: therein, as will appear, lay a difference between the Latitudinarians and most of their confrères.

Hooker and Laud both followed the standard medieval tradition of Thomistic scholasticism which distinguished between the "certainty of evidence" and the "certainty of adherence" in respect of Christian belief.[28] By this distinction, the "certainty of evidence" attached to what the human intellect unaided by grace could attain from a consideration of the external evidences of the Christian revelation, such as Christ's miracles, the swift propagation of Christianity, and the holiness of Christian precepts, all in combination with the truths of natural religion. This "certainty of evidence" did not produce "divine faith," but what the scholastics variously called "human faith" or "acquisite faith." "Divine faith," or the fullest conviction of the truth of Christianity, required more than external evidences and the operation of the intellect; Aquinas defined it as "the act of the intellect assenting to a divine truth owing to the movement of the will, which is itself moved by the grace of God."[29] To a "divine faith" attached the "certainty of adherence," and in the end, it was resolved into supernatural and suprarational motives of credibility, the illuminating assistance of God himself. Hooker and Laud were emphatic on the necessity of superadding grace to reason in order to attain faith. Laud wrote, "Faith is a mixed act of the will and the understanding; and the will inclines the understanding to yield full approbation to that whereof it sees not full proof." As we read the Bible, and converse with its text, "we meet with the Spirit of God inwardly inclining our hearts, and sealing the full assurance of the sufficiency"[30] of all other motives of credibility. Similarly, Hooker said, "Other motives and inducements, be they never so strong and consonant unto reason, are notwithstanding uneffectual of themselves to work faith . . . , if the special grace of the Holy Ghost concurs not to the enlightening of our minds."[31] Hooker and Laud were careful to define grace in a way that would give little comfort to enthusiasts. As with the scholastics, grace neither banished nor contradicted reason, but supplemented it. "Grace," wrote Laud, "is never placed but in a reasonable creature, and proves by the very seat which it has taken up that the end it has is to be spiritual eye-water, to make reason see what 'by nature only it cannot,' but never to blemish reason in that which it can, 'comprehend.' "[32] Besides insisting upon the role of grace, Hooker and Laud also included in their notion of

"faith," as the medieval scholastics had done, the element of the Church's authority, which further served to set them apart from the strict biblicism of Chillingworth and the Latitudinarians. But the most striking difference—the crux of the novelty of Chillingworth's system—was that while he explicitly assigned to "divine faith" a comparatively low order of certainty, the others with equal explicitness considered it far superior to any other kind of certainty, both in quality and content, because it had God not only as its object but also as its effective cause. "Faith" was no more "knowledge" to Chillingworth, he said, than three was four; but to those in the Thomistic tradition, the assurance of Christianity was not only as certain as mathematics, it was in a sense more certain, being an assent to a higher and qualitatively different order of truth.[33]

Just as Chillingworth and the Latitudinarians differed from the Thomistic tradition of Hooker and Laud, similarly they differed from the Cambridge Platonists, who were essentially in the Augustinian tradition. This difference is important, for it proves decisively that despite seventeenth-century usage, the Cambridge Platonists should not be called "Latitudinarians" with an upper-case initial. Like the Dutch Arminians,[34] the Cambridge Platonists were inheritors of the traditions of Christian Humanism. They formed their theology in reaction against the Calvinism of the *decretum fateor horribile*, and against Hobbesian materialism. The respect for reason implicit in their soteriology, their irenicism, and their theological minimalism was enlarged and enhanced by their devotion to the writings of Plato and the neo-Platonists, especially Plotinus. Like the Humanists, they earnestly desiderated a synthesis of pagan philosophy with Christian divinity, and against the prevailing Calvinist distrust during the Interregnum of "merely human" systems, they deliberately and with a high sense of mission set out to claim for reason what they thought was its proper role in theology.

That role was a large one. "Nothing without reason is to be proposed," Whichcote wrote in his *Aphorisms*, "nothing against reason is to be believed; Scripture is to be taken in a rational sense."[35] Again, "The reason of a man's mind must be satisfied; no man can think against it."[36] And again, "He that believes what God says, without evidence that God says it; does not believe God, while he believes the thing, which comes from God."[37] Such statements could be multiplied *ad infinitum* from the works of the other Cambridge Platonists. They might well have come from the pen of Tillotson, but he would not have meant by them what Whichcote meant, for though the epistemologies of the Cambridge Platonists differed somewhat from each other, none of them meant by "reason" what the Latitudinarians did.

Reason, declared Whichcote, was the "candle of the Lord; lighted by God, and lighting us to God. *Res illuminata, illuminans.*"[38] It was, said John Smith, "a light flowing from the fountain and father of lights,"[39] a kind of grace which carried with it innately and instinctively an awareness of God and of his love and care for mankind, as well as of man's dependence on him and man's obligation to love and serve him. Reason was natural in the sense that it was distinctive to all men but it was more particularly supernatural because it was a "deiform seed," and "the first participation from God."[40] Reason was also essentially of a supernatural character because its primary function was in the religious sphere, to attain a "participation in that divine reason in God."[41] So much were reason and revelation aspects of the same truth, so much were they both means of participating in the divine reason, that reason itself was a kind of revelation; so that man by chastely following the "Candle of the Lord" is never astonished at the contents of Scriptural revelation, but instead finds his mind enlarged and his spirit gratified by the truth of Christianity. In this sense, therefore, revelation was completely rational. As Whichcote said,

> I receive the truth of the Christian religion, in way of illumination, affection, and choice: I myself am taken with it, as understanding it and knowing it; I retain it, as a welcome guest; it is not forced into me, but I let it in; yet so as taught of God: and I see cause for my continuance to embrace it. Do I dishonor my faith, or do any wrong to it, to tell the world, that my mind and my understanding are satisfied in it? I have no reason against it; yea, the highest and purest reason for it![42]

But yet, semi-mystical and religious as their conception of reason was, "faith" for the Cambridge Platonists was qualitatively a different thing from reason. To be sure, Tulloch was right to insist that it is useless to try to draw too clear a distinction between their idea of reason and their idea of faith.[43] For "faith" with them was very much like reason in that both were operations of the entire personality, in which sometimes, as Pascal said, the heart has its reasons that the mind know not of. Their affinity with Pascal, in fact, was not slight. They could have agreed with the French mathematician when he wrote, "*Voilà ce que c'est que la foi: Dieu sensible au coeur non à la raison.*" Faith with the Cambridge thinkers had its true ground in what Pascal called the "order of the heart" as opposed to the "order of the understanding."[44] Consequently, they thought that theological speculation, and mere ratiocination and discursive thinking, were antithetical to true religion, which rests in the purging of the will so that it can *motu proprio* arrive at a union with the divine font of all goodness and reality. And further to complicate the almost indissoluable interconnection between the Cambridge Platonists' conceptions of faith and reason is the fact that "faith" with them was much like "reason" in

that they never scorned the "rational evidence" of Christianity—prophecies, the integrity of the authors of the New Testament, and most important, miracles.*

What does, then, set their conception of "faith" decisively apart from "reason"? It is, that like Hooker and Laud, they too asserted that for the fullest assent and assurance in Christianity a man must have more than objective motives of credibility. As Whichcote said, "[The Christian religion] speaks for itself, it recommends itself to its subject, it satisfies the reason of the minds; procures its own entertainment, by its own excellence. I add also, that the persuasion of the Holy Spirit contributes to the mind's assurance and satisfaction."[46] All purely natural inducements to assent still left a man's mind "unsatisfied and unresolved" unless there were added thereunto "the agency of the divine spirit in pursuance of what God has done in the way of divine truth."[47] Miracles were important, Nathaniel Culverwel wrote, but they could not give full Christian certainty without the "seal of the Spirit . . . who writes his own word upon the soul with a conquering and triumphant sunbeam."[48] Thus it is pellucidly clear that the similarities between Cambridge Platonism and Latitudinarianism were merely superficial: it is true that for both groups "reason" and "faith" were inextricably interconnected concepts; but the difference was that while the Cambridge Platonists divinized reason, the Latitudinarians rationalized divinity.

Thus Hooker, the Laudians, and the Cambridge Platonists all followed the medieval practice of distinguishing reason and faith both in respect of their objects, *and* in respect of the processes by which they conveyed certainty. By resolving "divine faith" into "moral certainty," Chillingworth and the Latitudinarians differentiated the objects but not the processes: "reason" related to natural truth, "faith" to supernatural truth, but both proceeded by the same rules of ratiocination. The "moral certainty" of Chillingworth and the Latitudinarians was thus the equivalent merely of what the others had called the "certainty of evidence," the preamble of the fuller "certainty of adherence." Yet it gave "divine faith," a term which the others had reserved for the assent which had God's grace as its indispensable cause. More than this, where the others

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* [In the light of more recent studies of Cambridge Platonism by such scholars as Allison Coudert, Alan Gabbey, Sarah Hutton, and Richard H. Popkin, we would have to recognize different tendencies and emphases among the authors defined as Cambridge Platonists.[45] Also, we would have to take account of their particular kind of millenarianism deriving from Joseph Mede. They were seriously involved in rationally identifying the prophetic events then underway and dating those that were to come. In addition, the Cambridge Platonists were heavily influenced by the theosophy of Jacob Boehme.—RHP]

believed that a divine faith carried with it an assurance transcending by far anything that unaided reason could reach, Chillingworth unblushingly averred that it was not quite so much as "knowledge." In this Chillingworth differed somewhat from the Latitudinarians, who had more confidence in moral certainty than he did, and who felt no hesitation in asserting that it was, in its own way, as "indubitable" or "undoubted" as any other kind of knowledge. Here, perhaps, was the main influence of the Cambridge Platonists upon them. Because the Platonists thought of reason as a kind of grace they had an unshakable trust in it.* The Latitudinarians conceived of grace as a kind of reason, which is a different proposition entirely; but while they did not learn how to define reason from the Platonists, they nonetheless learned from them how to be supremely confident of its efficacy.

That the Latitudinarians had a greater confidence in reason than did Chillingworth permitted them to drop entirely the traditional distinction between the "certainty of evidence" and the "certainty of adherence." Chillingworth retained it in theory but made it irrelevant in practice. Since, in his view, the certainty of evidence produced the divine faith which was sufficient for salvation, a certainty of adherence was perhaps desirable but not necessary. The Holy Ghost, he said, "being implored by devout and humble prayer, and sincere obedience, may, and will, by degrees advance his servants higher, and give them a certainty of adherence, beyond their certainty of evidence."[50] Still, no one ought to be disquieted if his faith never exceeded moral certainty. As he said,

> Some experience makes me fear, that the faith of considering and discoursing men is like to be cracked with too much straining: and that being possessed with this false principle, that it is vain to believe the gospel of Christ, with such a kind or degree of assent, as they yield to other matters of tradition; and finding, that their faith of it is to them undiscernible, from the belief they give to the truth of other stories, are in danger not to believe at all, thinking, not at all as good as to no purpose; or else, though indeed they do believe it, yet to think they do not, and to cast themselves into wretched agonies and perplexities, as fearing they have not that, without which it is impossible to please God, and obtain eternal happiness.[51]

As we have seen, the Latitudinarians took the obviously abbreviated step of ignoring completely the notion of the certainty of adherence: their confidence in the powers of reason made it superfluous, and in fact, their

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* [Popkin has shown that both More and Cudworth were willing to entertain the most extreme form of scepticism before rejecting it. Cudworth, in fact, used Sextus Empiricus as one of the main authorities for his theology, namely his disproof of atheism.[49]—RHP]

system of rational theology was so constructed that there could be no place for it.

Underlying these basic changes in the definitions of traditional theological terms was a monumental shift in mood and attitude. The truths for which saints had endured and martyrs died, the fullness of commitment which raised even young men's sights and the yearning of maidens to a celestial order of meaning, the beliefs which made a sacrament of the totality of nature—all these, with Chillingworth and the Latitudinarians, were resolved into a dispassionate and calculating assent to evidence according to the methodological requirements of the legal doctrine of 'truth beyond a reasonable doubt,' a doctrine which, in fact, owes its origins in the common law directly to their writings.[52] The appearance of this new religious attitude in seventeenth-century England has justly been called a cultural revolution. It is therefore worth repeating here that Chillingworth's system, which in the hands of the Latitudinarians was subsequently to play such a prominent role in that revolution, was originally devised in reaction to the *machine de guerre*. This strongly suggests that both the *machine de guerre* and Great Tew's response to it have usually not been given proper emphasis in the intellectual history of the century.[53]

Falkland and Hammond subsequently advanced the rational theology of the *Religion of Protestants*, usually in counter-attack against the *machine de guerre*, as for example in Falkland's *Discourse of the Infallibility of the Church of Rome* (1651), and in Hammond's *Of Schism* (1653). In the 1630s and 1640s, one of the chief uses to which all three put their system was in attempts to preserve religious unity and peace in England, and by moderate doctrines of ecclesiology, to conciliate dissenting elements in Church and State. They were, of course, unsuccessful, and Falkland died in 1643 and Chillingworth in 1644 for the royalist cause. But Henry Hammond survived until 1660, when he died of the stone a few weeks before the Restoration. Until his death, Hammond continued unabated a prodigious output of the theological publications; between 1650 and 1660, he wrote over thirty separate works. Whether he wrote against infallibility, or for reconciliation of warring religious parties, as in his *Of Fundamentals* (1654), or against speculative and practical "atheism," as in his *Reasonableness of the Christian Religion* (1650), or whether on the Scriptures, as in his famous *Paraphrase and Annotations on the New Testament* (1653), his voice was forever the rational and moderate voice of Great Tew. And at a time when so few voices were raised to defend the Church of England, it must have seemed at times to young men like the Latitudinarians that Hammond's publications were some of the chief proofs of the Church's continued existence.[54]

Hammond's work during this decade provided a direct link of continuity between Falkland's *'convivium theologicum'* and the Latitudinarianism of the Restoration. In 1662, two years after Hammond's death, Stillingfleet published what might be called the manifesto of seventeenth-century Latitudinarianism, his *Origines Sacrae*, in order, he said, to present Christianity in a form suitable "to the proper temper of this age."[55] That form was, as we have seen, essentially the system developed at Great Tew.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE BEGINNINGS OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LATITUDINARIANISM

The temper of the age sustained seventeenth-century Latitudinarianism for about a generation and a half. But toward the end of the century, times began to change. We have seen that the apologists for Latitudinarianism, S.P., Fowler, Glanvill, and Burnet, all insisted upon its orthodoxy in speculative theology. The Latitudinarians' detractors accused them of paying too much attention to reason and not enough to grace; of making the certainty of Christianity lower than that of some forms of natural knowledge; of stressing natural religion to the derogation of revealed religion. All these charges had some elements of truth. When they were accused of heresy, however, in the sense of deviating from the essentials of historical orthodoxy as contained in the ancient and traditional Creeds, the charge was, on the whole, completely false. But during the last decade of the century, the integrity of Latitudinarianism as a system of rational theology which could and did support orthodoxy began to crumble at the edges. It began to take on the characteristics of what we have called eighteenth-century Latitudinarianism, and to fulfill the long-standing accusation that it sheltered heterodoxy.

The manifestations of this change appeared in the guise of Trinitarian heresies, for speculative heterodoxy either begins with one's notion of the Trinity, or else quickly displays itself there. The 1690s were marked by an intense agitation about the Trinity, culminating in the great Trinitarian Controversy of the turn of the century.[1] In the larger sense the Trinitarian Controversy was a symptom of the disturbing effect on traditional Christianity of accumulated pressures from all the rational tendencies of a rational age. For the Trinity has always been a potential stumbling-block for advocates of reason in religion, since no belief defies rational analysis so stubbornly as that of three co-equal and co-eternal Persons in one God. The prominence of Trinitarian disputes at the end of the century can thus be viewed as pointing to the end of one phase of the English Enlightenment and the beginning of a new one. The seventeenth-century Latitudinarians were important representatives of the earlier stage, which was characterized by confident assertions of the harmonious interrelationship between reason and orthodoxy. Eighteenth-century Latitudinarianism sometimes partook of the nature

of the later stage, wherein actual conflict between the two was more the rule than the exception.

The specific Trinitarian heresy with which the seventeenth-century Latitudinarians were regularly charged was that of Socinianism.* The accusation had a superficial verisimilitude. Socinianism was *par excellence* a rational religion, and had many similarities to Latitudinarianism. Whereas Arianism rejected the deity of Christ but not his divinity, Socinianism rejected both, and by the end of the century was indistinguishable from Unitarianism. Since the Christology of Socinianism thus dispensed with the traditional orthodox scheme of salvation, it consequently tended to place emphatic stress on morality and good works. Because the Latitudinarians were both "rational" and "moral" preachers, it was perhaps inevitable that their enemies should declare that "the orthodox Latitudinarians were concealed Socinians; and that they acquiesced in Trinitarian formulas for the sake of lucre or reputation."[3]

After Tillotson became Archbishop of Canterbury and therefore the most prominent Latitudinarian in England, he bore the brunt of denunciations which previously had been bestowed on the group as a whole. A typical diatribe announced that "his religion is Latitudinarian, which is none. . . . He is owned by the atheistical wits of all England as their true primate and apostle. . . . He leads them not only the length of Socinianism . . . but to call in question all revelation."[4] To rebut such attacks, Tillotson felt himself obliged in 1693 to republish sermons he had preached on the Trinity in 1679–80, which showed his Christology to be unexceptionably Athanasian. Yet it is true that he, like the other Latitudinarians, had little affection for the Athanasian Creed: he once told Burnet that "I wish we were well rid of it."[5] But what they objected to was its anathemas, not its doctrine. Tillotson, for example, did not despair of the salvation of his Socinian friend Thomas Firmin, a noted philanthropist; but he thought that Firmin was wrong, and (as he assured Queen Mary) often tried to "set him right."[6]

But when all is said and done, the Latitudinarians' rational theology had no built-in guarantees of orthodoxy. More than they suspected, they were victims of the Idols of the Tribe. They thought that they had proved Christianity by a thoroughly rational process and with no preconceived notions; actually they were so rooted in the Christian tradition that they could not realize that their conclusions were also postulates and that their whole system was an intricate and elaborate begging of the question. The main cause of the change from seventeenth-century Latitudi-

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* [The Socinians were banished from Poland in 1658, and refugees appeared in Holland, Germany, and England, "permeating diverse churches and fellowships" throughout the rest of that century as well as the following one.[2]—RHP]

narianism to that of the eighteenth century was implicit in the very nature of the Latitudinarian theology of faith and reason. The difficulty was that its conclusions depended entirely on how "reason" and "reasonable" were to be defined. To change the Latitudinarians' definition of "reason" in any substantial way was to destroy the underpinnings of their version of Christianity; yet there have been few times in European history when conceptions of reason were in such flux as they were in the seventeenth century. Similarly, to approach the Bible with a different sense from theirs of what was "reasonable" was not necessarily to emerge from it with their conclusions. So it was that the Latitudinarians Samuel Clarke and William Whiston[7] could find the Athanasian symbol "unreasonable," and settled upon what they thought was the more apostolic, primitive, and "reasonable" doctrine of Arianism. The thoroughly Latitudinarian Daniel Whitby (1638–1729), Precentor of Salisbury Cathedral, was led in the last years of his life to question Christ's deity, though he had previously written against Arianism and Socinianism. Arthur Bury (1624–1713), onetime Rector of Exeter College, Oxford, published in 1690 a book with pronounced Arian views called *The Naked Gospel*. There is no more striking symbol of the decline of the alliance between orthodoxy and Latitudinarianism than the title of his subsequent defense of Arianism, published in 1695; he called it *Latitudinarius Orthodoxus*. Even Edward Fowler did not emerge unscathed and unblemished from the Trinitarian Controversy. Like Tillotson, he was a friend of Thomas Firmin, and often tried to dissuade him from Socinianism. To that purpose he published in 1693 *Twenty-eight Propositions, by which the Doctrine of the Trinity is Endeavoured to be Explained;* from this book and from the subsequent controversy it caused, it appeared that Fowler had difficulty with the co-eternity (though not the co-equality) of Christ. It is too strong to call him an Arian, but he had certainly given some cause for strict Athanasians to regard him *oculo obliquo.*[8*]

Deism had roots separate from Latitudinarianism, but the breakdown of the Latitudinarian system was one of the chief causes of the Deist movement at the beginning of the eighteenth century, chiefly through

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* [The most important Arian was Sir Isaac Newton, who did not publish his views as such. In three letters to John Locke, and in his "Paradoxical Questions Concerning St. Athanasius," Newton laid out the basis for his anti-Trinitarianism. At present, the vast majortiy of Newton's theological manuscripts await publication, with only a small number having appeared. An international committee is working to make the copies of documents available. When that occurs, it will be possible to appreciate Newton's theology and its influence on his contemporaries. In the meantime, as manuscript materials become available, his views on the topic are being studied.[9]—RHP]

the instrumentality of the writings of John Locke.* Locke was like the double-faced Janus. On the one hand, he summed up the seventeenth century's quest for a rational certainty in religion in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) and his *Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695). On the other hand, this summation provided what was subsequently to serve as a basic tool for Deistic or sceptical attacks on Christianity, particularly during the eighteenth century. And he himself provided a perfect illustration of how a change in the definition of "reason" could corrode the Latitudinarian system almost to the point of dissolution. Locke's theology bears most of the hallmarks of Latitudinarian thought; his concept of reason in its relation to revelation has close affinities with Latitudinarianism; moreover, his churchmanship, his ethics, and his minimal theology were characteristically Latitudinarian.

Yet he was a Latitudinarian with a difference, and that difference is the chief signal of the breakdown of the Latitudinarian system. From 1662, when Stillingfleet published his *Origines Sacrae,* until 1690, when Locke published the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* were the palmy days of the Latitudinarians' rational religion: one could perhaps reject Latitudinarian apologetics, but not deny their force and philosophical respectability. But the immense prestige of Lockean epistemology outmoded the Latitudinarian notion of "reason," and so put their theology on the defensive in a way that it had never been before. By a curious aptness of the sort that history sometimes provides, this parting of the ways between seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century Latitudinarianism was marked by a massive and bitter controversy between Stillingfleet and Locke.[11]

The central issue of the Locke–Stillingfleet correspondence was the nature of "reason," for whether or not reason will support revealed Christianity, Stillingfleet observed, depended on how it was defined. Stillingfleet singled out for special attention the theories of 'ideas' and of 'substance' contained in the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding.* There Locke made the usual seventeenth-century distinction between primary and secondary qualities of objects, which as we have seen the Latitudinarians tended to ignore as being unimportant. Since, Locke said, we cannot explain how the simple ideas induced by primary qualities are able to exist by themselves, we suppose "some *substratum* wherein they do subsist, and from which they do result, which therefore we call *substance.*"[12] But we cannot know anything about the substance,

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* [A great deal of new material about Locke based on the Lovelace Manuscript Collection at Oxford has appeared during the last thirty years. It has enabled scholars to establish the chronology of Locke's writings, his sources, and his interactions with political, scientific, and religious figures of the time.[10]—RHP]

or essence of a thing. That is true also about the substance "even of God himself."[13] All that reason can tell us about God comes ultimately from simple ideas derived from sensation and reflection.

> [We have] from what we experiment in ourselves, got the ideas of existence and duration; of knowledge and power; of pleasure and happiness; and of several other qualities and powers, which it is better to have than to be without; when we would frame an idea the most suitable we can to the Supreme Being, we enlarge every one of these with our idea of infinity; and so putting them together, make our complex idea of God.[14]

Reason can tell us nothing about God's substance or essence, then, but just about his attributes. This is all very well, but can revelation tell us more? Locke set up the usual Latitudinarian tests for a proper revelation: it cannot contradict reason, it must be tested by principles of morality and natural religion, and it must be accredited by miracles. But to these tests he added another qualification for a true revelation: "I say, that *no man inspired by God can by any revelation communicate to others any new simple ideas which they had not before from sensation or reflection.*"[15] Consequently, revelation for Locke cannot disclose anything that we could not already know by reason. Locke had written as much in his Commonplace Book on 18 September 1681: "That there is a God, and *what God is*, nothing can discover to us but natural reason."[16] God's substance being unknowable, because any substance is unknowable; and revelation being unable to convey any new simple ideas, we therefore cannot know that the one God is a Trinity of three Divine Persons or that Christ had two natures in one Person.

Stillingfleet was therefore more than justified in his uneasiness about Locke's doctrines of "substance," "idea," and "person." As he said,

> Let men express their minds by "ideas" if they please, and take pleasure in sorting and comparing and connecting them; I am not forward to condemn them; for every age must have its new modes, and it is very well if truth and reason be received in any garb. I was therefore far enough from condemning your way of ideas, till I found it made the only ground of certainty, and made use of to overthrow the mysteries of our faith.[17]

Here he referred to Toland's *Christianity Not Mysterious*, and was identifying Toland's position with Locke's. In that he was partly mistaken, for Locke disavowed the use Toland had made of the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, and it is true that no matter what Toland said, Locke was no friend of his.[18] But Stillingfleet was essentially correct in noticing the intellectual connections between Locke's epistemology and *Christianity Not Mysterious*. Toland made explicit what had merely been implicit in the *Essay*: that we cannot believe anything that is unintelligible to us. In doing away with all doctrines "above reason," he was applying

Locke's epistemology more rigidly to revelation than Locke had done in *The Reasonableness of Christianity*. Toland believed that his book was a splendid vindication of Christianity, but he cleared it of so many obscurities that the more one looks at it the more it looks like natural religion. And as Leslie Stephen observed, *Christianity Not Mysterious* was "the signal gun which brought on the general action"[19] of the Deist Controversy, which continued well into the first half of the eighteenth century.

As for Locke himself, Stillingfleet regularly inquired why he did so "carefully avoid"[20] declaring his faith in the Trinity in the sense in which the Christian Church had always received that doctrine. But Locke, like the Arian Whiston in his correspondence with Lloyd,[21] preferred to take refuge in the less precise phrases of the New Testament. In doing so, of course, he was following the practice which Fowler said the Latitudinarians counseled in exposition of speculative points of difficulty. But there cannot in fact be any doubt that Locke was some kind of Socinian.[22] He never attacked the Trinity openly, but in no place did he affirm it, and he systematically avoided opportunities to declare a belief in the Deity of Christ. A collection of his references to Jesus shows that while he did not deny some aspect of superhumanity to the person of Christ as God's agent of revelation, he did not consider that Christ was God or that the Scriptures asserted that he was God. In short, Locke's rational Christianity, in its notions of the Trinity and the Incarnation, had floated free of the two main doctrinal anchors of historical orthodoxy.

The Locke–Stillingfleet correspondence, for all that its thousand printed pages produced more heat than light, is important to us as a signal of the parting of the ways between Latitudinarianism and the new tendencies in epistemology. Stillingfleet did not believe, for example, in innate ideas in the sense that Locke attacked them, but he objected to Locke's rejection of them because, as he said, some apologists had used them as a basis for a rational defense of Christianity. He conceded that Locke's notion of ideas was clever enough, but he counseled Locke to abandon it for the better way of "common sense."[23] His fundamental objection to the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, in short, was that Locke had limited the legitimate realm of reason to such a degree that reason could not properly vindicate revelation. And from the point of view of the Latitudinarian system, he was, of course, correct.*

Locke further illustrated the beginning of the breakdown of that system by meddling with miracles.[25] The Latitudinarians had defined a

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* [In an article on Stillingfleet's philosophy, Popkin has pointed out what the application of the empirical theory of knowledge to religion would lead to.[24] In this sense, Stillingfleet's dispute with Locke is a turning point in that subsequent philosophers would develop Locke's views rather than Stillingfleet's.—RHP]

genuine miracle as an interruption of the regular course of nature in a manner manifestly from God for the accrediting of a divine revelation. They did not dispute that prodigies and wonders and minor miracles could be performed by a power other than divine; Moses had had to compete with the Pharaoh's magicians, and Christ himself had warned of false prophets who work wonders. In practice, the means by which a man could distinguish between true and false miracles resolved itself into a typically seventeenth-century quantitative procedure: one should measure their magnitude and number. Christ's miracles were more spectacular and numerous than any others ever worked, and consequently Christianity should hold the field until greater cases were produced. The assumption underlying this doctrine of miracles was that a man can in fact know enough about the orderly course of nature to know when it has been superseded. Locke accepted the Latitudinarian notions about miracles with one damning exception: he doubted that a man could really know enough about nature to say that divine providence had actually interposed in it. "A miracle . . . I take to be a sensible operation, which, being above the comprehension of the spectator, and *in his opinion* contrary to the established course of nature, is taken by him to be divine."[26*] Locke was aware of the objections that might be raised to his definition: (1) "That hereby what is a miracle is made very uncertain; for it depending on the opinion of the spectator, that will be a miracle to one which will not be to another"; and (2) "That the notion of a miracle thus enlarged, may sometimes come to take in operations that have nothing extraordinary or supernatural in them, and thereby invalidate the use of miracles for the attesting of divine revelation." His answer to the first objection was not rebuttal but agreement: "Now every one being able to judge of those laws [of nature] only by his own acquaintance with Nature; and notions of its force (which are different in different men) it is unavoidable that that should be a miracle to one, which is not so to another."[27] But he denied the force of the second objection. "It is to be considered, that divine revelation receives testimony from no other miracles, but such as are wrought to witness his mission from God who delivers the revelation. All other miracles that are done in the world, how many

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* [It should be noted that Spinoza had contended that a miracle was a contravention of a law of nature, and that such a contravention was an impossibility. Locke and others discussing miracles were clearly trying to distance themselves from Spinoza's total denial of the possibility of miracles. Nonetheless, Locke was accused of being a Spinozist by William Carroll. See his *Dissertation upon the Tenth Chapter of the Fourth Book of Mr. Locke's Essay . . . Wherein the Author's Endeavours to Establish Spinoza's Atheistical Hypothesis . . . are Discovered and Confuted* (1706).—RHP]

or great soever, revelation is not concerned in."[28] We know from reason that a revelation cannot pretend to come except from the "one only true God,"[29] and historically there have been only three genuine monotheists who have claimed to be the agents of revelation: Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed. Of these three, Mohammed "having none to produce, pretends to no miracles for the vouching of his mission; so that the only revelations that come attested by miracles, being only those of Moses and Christ, and they confirming each other, the business of miracles, as it stands really in matter of fact, has no manner of difficulty about it; and I think the most scrupulous or sceptical cannot from miracles raise the least doubt about the divine revelation of the gospel."[30] With the Latitudinarians, Locke agreed that "the number, variety and greatness of the miracles, wrought for the confirmation of the doctrine delivered by Jesus Christ, carry with them such strong marks of an extraordinary divine power, that the truth of his mission will stand firm and unquestionable, till any one rising up in opposition to them shall do greater miracles than he and his apostles did."[31]

Despite these disclaimers, Locke's doctrine of miracles "appears to be one of the most cautious and most destructive attacks on miracles ever attempted."[32] By it the validation of a miracle becomes, at bottom, subjective. What did the Apostles, plain and simple men, know of the laws of nature? And how, therefore, could they have been competent witnesses as to whether Christ had really worked true miracles or not? Still, it is clear that Locke himself did not mean to impugn the miracles validating Christianity. Yet with the advantage of hindsight, we are aware of the problem raised by his definition of a miracle. It would not be long before David Hume would combine the subjectivism of that definition with the rules of evidence proposed by the Latitudinarians themselves. Citing Tillotson's *Discourse Against Transubstantiation* on the nature of evidence, Hume's essay "Of Miracles" (1748) declared that the universality of regular natural laws has a higher evidential claim than men's opinions of them, so that "we may establish it as a maxim, that no human testimony can have such force as to prove a miracle, and make it a just foundation for any . . . system of religion."[33]

Enough has been said to suggest some of the means whereby seventeenth-century Latitudinarianism evolved into the somewhat different phenomenon of eighteenth-century Latitudinarianism. The fortunes of eighteenth-century Latitudinarianism comprise, of course, a story that cannot be told here. But it is unfair to leave a discussion of seventeenth-century Latitudinarianism having noted only its tendency to shade into heterodoxy at its periphery. Just as there was no guarantee of orthodoxy in the Latitudinarian system of rational religion, neither was there any

absolute necessity for heterodoxy. Latitudinarianism remained a dominant movement in the Church of England until after the beginning of the nineteenth century. In different hands it continued to do yeoman service for the preservation of Anglicanism in times unfriendly to orthodoxy of any sort. *Mutatis mutandis,* its rational theology was, for example, the informing principle of the apologetics of Joseph Butler (1692–1752), Bishop of Durham, and of William Paley (1743–1805), Archdeacon of Carlisle, who were perhaps the two most able champions of rational Christianity in eighteenth-century England. Butler's *Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature* (1736) has been termed "one of the most important and influential books in Christian literature,"[34] and "one of the most original [works] of any time."[35] But original though it was, it is incomprehensible from the historical point of view if it is not considered an extension of the rational theology of seventeenth-century Latitudinarianism, to which it bears marked and unmistakable affinities. Similarly, Paley's *View of the Evidences of Christianity* (1794), which had gone through fifteen editions by 1811 and which, like Butler's *Analogy,* was required reading for Anglican ordinands throughout the reign of Queen Victoria, is directly in the apologetical tradition established by the seventeenth-century Latitudinarians. Many other such examples could be adduced. They strongly suggest that instead of regarding the seventeenth-century Latitudinarians, as is often done, as precursors of heterodoxy, it would perhaps be wiser and more just to consider them from the point of view of the contributions they made to the vitality of Anglicanism in the eighteenth century by having cast Christian doctrine into modes and forms suitable to the temper and spirit of an Age of Reason.

PART THREE

"THE DESIGN OF CHRISTIANITY"

The Latitudinarians unanimously agreed, Fowler declared, that the "chief design of Christianity" was "to make men good."[1] Christ did not come into the world, Glanvill insisted, to make men "notional, and knowing," but rather to show them the way to virtue.[2] Misapprehensions as to the nature and purpose of the Christian revelation, the Latitudinarians firmly believed, were the chief sources of fanaticism and enthusiasm; more important, they contributed more than anything else to divisions among Christians and to religious factionalism in England. There could, Fowler wrote, be no "more effectual course to put an end to those [controversies] we are at this day disturbed with, and to the pernicious effects of all whatsoever, then . . . the right explaining and well improving of [true goodness]: for this is to strike at the grand cause of them, they being imputed to nothing so much as to the ignorance of, or nonattendance to, the design of Christianity."[3] Too many men, he said, considered Christianity to be *"ostentatio scientiae, non lex vitae."*[4] If they would learn that Christianity was a way of life in which all men could unite, then the dissensions that had rent the seamless robe of Christ, and "most miserably defaced the beauty, obscured, nay and even utterly extinguished the glory of the Church of Christ,"[5] would cease forever, and all Englishmen could be joined together in the unity of spirit in the bond of peace. The Latitudinarians, therefore, Glanvill stated, considered that the "main design" of their own Christian ministry must necessarily be to preach true virtue,[6] not only for its own sake, but also because to make men good was to make them one in the Lord, and, in England, to end "all unnecessary schisms and separations . . . and those hatreds and animosities . . . that arise from lesser disagreements."[7]

CHAPTER NINE

"THE BUSINESS OF THE CHRISTIAN INSTITUTION"

To make men good has never been an easy task, but the Latitudinarians ministered to an age in which it seems to have been even more difficult than usual. When Daniel Defoe wrote in 1698 that "immorality is without doubt the present reigning distemper of the nation,"[1] he stated what had been a commonplace for over a generation. Sin is an inevitable travelling companion of the human condition; but even if allowances are made for the Jeremiahs who admonish every age of men, the contemporary evidence for a "great and amazing progress [of] vice and irreligion"[2] in the England of the Restoration and Revolutionary periods is consistent and overwhelming. The Latitudinarians had no monopoly on concern about the apparent increase in drunkenness, prostitution, sexual license, blasphemy, the performance of lewd plays, and the sale of lascivious books. Nor were they alone in castigating the men of their day "whose manners are so bad, that scarce anything can be imagined worse, unless it be the wit they use the excuse them with."[3] But as "Moral Preachers," they ranked among the chief of those "sober and considerate men" whom the immorality of the times "filled . . . with a just apprehension of the displeasure of Almighty God."[4]

God's displeasure concerned every Englishman, however virtuous, for it was commonly believed that national sins invited national punishments. As Tillotson remarked, "public bodies and communities of men, as such, can only be rewarded and punished in this world. For in the next, all those public societies and combinations wherein men are now linked together under several governments, shall be dissolved [and] every man shall then give an account of himself to God, and receive his own reward, and bear his own burden."[5] England's sins particularly cried out to God for punishment, the Latitudinarians believed, for England was God's chosen nation, the citadel of European Protestantism, the seat of "the best religion in the world, the Christian religion . . . in the greatest perfection and purity, that was ever in any National Church."[6] To reclaim "our Jerusalem"[7] from its sins, God had visited the Great Rebellion upon it, decimated its capital city with the Great Plague of 1665 and cleansed it with the Great Fire of 1666. Yet still Englishmen did not come to their senses. In 1686, the year after James II assumed the throne, Tillotson preached a lugubrious sermon before Princess Anne, predicting either the end of the world or at least "some very dismal calamity greater

than any our eyes have yet seen," unless Englishmen undertook a "speedy reformation" of their ways.[8] The actions of James soon gave color to such fears, and the Latitudinarians were as one in considering his reign as a visitation of tyranny which Englishmen had invited by their impiety and irreligion. But such afflictions were not only divine retributions: if England was indeed to be *urbs Sion aurea,* Englishmen must be sternly dealt with in order that they be made worthy of their privileged position in God's dispensation of worldly affairs. "What can be plainer than this," Lloyd explained to William and Mary in a sermon at Whitehall, "that [God] has punished us as a people whom he had no mind to destroy?" "In all the history I have read," he continued, "I dare challenge any man to show where one nation ever had two such deliverances, as have happened to ours, in one age."[9] Not even the Jews could claim such signal proofs of God's special providence as the Restoration and the Revolution. But this was England's last chance. God had saved the true religion by accomplishing the Glorious Revolution; the "chief business" of religion was "the purifying and reforming" of men's lives; obviously, therefore, a reformation of manners was "the chief design of God's providence, in this Revolution."[10] It was consequently unlikely, Lloyd warned the new monarchs, that England could expect a third deliverance if it remained sinful. William and Mary took such admonitions as Lloyd's to heart, and seemed convinced that the political revolution must be a moral one as well. They issued various proclamations against immorality and vice, enlisting the help of the Church to implement them. Encouraged by having "such princes, as enjoin nothing but what they are patterns of themselves,"[11] the English clergy, but particularly the Latitudinarians, waged war against sin with renewed vigor. Their chief instrument was the sermon; as bishops, they also used pastoral letters to their clergy, wherein they laid special emphasis upon the improvement of the morals of the ministry itself; and all of them encouraged the activities of the various Societies for the Reformation of Manners which sprang up throughout the country. Tenison and Fowler especially gave vigorous support to these Societies, which were generally composed of laymen who policed their communities and reported to the civil authorities such vice and dereliction as they could ferret out. High Churchmen like John Sharp, Archbishop of York, were suspicious of these groups: Sharp, for example, thought that spying and informing could bring about a reform that would be only temporary and superficial; he disliked the cooperation between Anglicans and Dissenters that was characteristic of their organization; and he thought that the membership of ministers was probably against canon law. But in 1699, Tenison issued a letter to the bishops of the province of Canterbury which bestowed explicit archiepiscopal ap-

proval on such societies and on the association of clergymen with them. This letter, which marked the high point of the cooperation between Church and Crown in the suppression of vice, directed the bishops to enjoin the clergy to "meet together and seek the cooperation of the churchwardens and pious laity in the reformation of manners"; to encourage laymen "to report all swearers, blasphemers, drunkards and abusers of the Lord's day, to the magistrates"; and as clergymen to be "foremost in placing [cases of habitual immorality] before the civil magistrate."[12]

But notwithstanding the practical benefits of virtue, the Latitudinarians, as we have seen, considered that goodness was in itself the end of man and the chief design of the Gospel. In preaching and writing, "though they concealed no practical verities that were proper and seasonable," Glanvill declared, "yet they were sparing in their speculations, except where they tended to the necessary vindication of the honor of God, or the directing the lives of men."[13] In private conversations, or when controversial attacks forced them to speculation on difficult points, they could, Glanvill said, debate theoretical matters with ease and skill. But in their public capacity as pastors they preferred to stress as exclusively as possible the practical duties of a Christian man. The emphasis which they placed on morality may be measured from the subjects of Tillotson's sermons. Of the 254 printed, all contain passages describing the practical applications of the subject of the discourse; and over three-quarters of them were devoted entirely to demonstrations of Christian duties and to exhortations to goodness and virtue. Fowler's exposition of Latitudinarianism, the *Free Discourse*, emphasized moral theology above everything else; and its two continuations, *The Design of Christianity* and *Libertas Evangelica*,[14] were devoted entirely to that subject.

The epistemology underlying the moral theology of the Latitudinarians was precisely identical with that underlying their speculative theology. The one presupposed the duties of natural religion; the other presupposed its principles; both principles and duties, however, were either a part of or immediately deductible from what Wilkins called "the nature of things in themselves" or what Glanvill termed "reason in the object." Consequently, just as the operations of the mind were attuned to the rational structure of external reality, so also the moral apprehensions of men answered to the eternal and immutable moral law of the universe. The Latitudinarians' conception of "moral law" thus placed them squarely in an ancient ethical tradition deriving primarily from Stoicism; and it was characteristic of their neo-Stoicism that they frequently refreshed themselves at the sources of that tradition, particularly Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. The Stoic conception of natural law had first been

popularized in the Latin West by Cicero, who summarized it in the famous statement in the *De Republica*:

> True law is right reason in agreement with nature; it is of universal application, unchanging and everlasting; it summons to duty by its commands, and averts from wrong-doing by its prohibitions. . . . It is a sin to try to alter this law, nor is it allowable to attempt to repeal any part of it, and it is impossible to abolish it entirely. We cannot be freed from its obligations by Senate or People, and we need not look outside ourselves for an expounder or interpreter of it. And there will not be different laws at Rome and at Athens, or different laws now and in the future, but one eternal and unchangeable law will be valid for all nations and for all times, and there will be one master and one ruler, that is, God, over us all, for He is the author of this law, its promulgator, and its enforcing judge.[15]

Such a conception of moral law was incorporated into Christian theology by the Church Fathers, and was an informing principle of the writings of Thomas Aquinas and those in the Thomistic tradition, particularly Richard Hooker. The Latitudinarians derived their notions of the moral law more immediately from the Cambridge Platonists, whose chief weapon it was against the notion of the arbitrary power of the God of the predestinarian Calvinists, and against Hobbes's not dissimilar contention that good and evil were determined solely by the will of the sovereign.

The Latitudinarians posited no separate rational faculty such as the *syntheresis* of St. Thomas for apprehending the law of nature. "Conscience," Tillotson declared, was "the principle or faculty whereby we judge of moral good and evil, and do accordingly direct and govern our actions. . . . [it] is nothing else but the judgment of a man's own mind concerning the morality of his actions; that is, the good, or evil, or indifference of them; telling us what things are commanded by God, and consequently are our duty; what things are forbidden by him, and consequently are sinful; what things are neither commanded nor forbidden, and consequently are indifferent."[16] "Conscience," then, was simply another name for "reason" when the mind operated in the realm of morality rather than in the realm of assent.

When a man gave assent to the existence of a Supreme Being of all perfections, implicitly he gave simultaneous assent, the Latitudinarians thought, to the necessity of performing the duties imposed by the natural law, for those duties were an inescapable corollary of the divine attributes. Mature reflection by any rational man, Wilkins explained, would convince him, quite apart from any special revelation, of the duty of adoring God because of the incommunicable divine attributes of simplicity, unity, immutability, and infiniteness. God's wisdom patently required "faith," "trust," and "hope" in him; his goodness naturally and

necessarily led men to love him; and his power prompted any reasonable man to revere and obey him.[17]

These duties of natural religion were not only logically inescapable deductions from the nature of the divine attributes; they were further "reasonable" in that they were a necessary consequence of what Wilkins called "the common principle of self-love."[18] "Everything," Wilkins observed, "is endowed with such a natural principle, whereby it is necessarily inclined to promote its own preservation and well-being." "Good," he added, was "that which has in it a fitness to promote this end"; "evil" was "that which is apt to hinder it."[19] The nature of man, he continued, "does consist in that faculty, whereby he is made capable of reason, of apprehending a deity, and of expecting a future state of rewards and punishments."[20] What is "good" for him, therefore, was a state consonant with his reason, that is, one which might "entitle him to the divine favor, and afford him the best assurance of a blessed estate after this life."[21] Men's duties toward their neighbors derived immediately from the principle of self-love. "We are," Wilkins explained, "all of us desirous that others should be just to us, ready to help us, and do good to us; and because 'tis a principle of the highest equity and reason, that we should be willing to do to others, as we desire and think them obliged to deal with us, this must therefore oblige us to do the same acts of charity and helpfulness towards them."[22] The Latitudinarians were thus quite certain, as Tillotson put it, that "our duty and our interest, are really but one and the same thing considered under several notions."[23] Consequently, no one in his right mind was exempt from the commands and prohibitions of natural religion. As Wilkins put it,

> The moral law being discoverable by natural light, to every man, who will but excite the principles of his own reason, and apply them to their due consequences; therefore there must be an obligation upon all men, who have but the use of their reason, to know these moral laws; and the ignorance of them must be an inexcusable sin. *Ignorantia juris* can be no plea in this case, because the law is written in every man's heart by nature, and the ignorance of mankind, as to any part of it, has been willfully contracted.[24]

Notwithstanding the clarity and compelling force of the precepts of natural religion, "it cannot be denied," Wilkins said, "but that in this dark and degenerate state into which mankind is sunk, there is a great want of a clearer light to discover our duty to us with greater certainty, and to put it beyond all doubt and dispute what is the good and acceptable will of God."[25] Revelation, he concluded, must therefore supplement the light of nature. It was their conception of how Christ's mission supplied the defects arising from original sin; their notion of Christian duties; their opinions on justifying faith and assisting grace—in short, their whole construction of the "design of Christianity"—that earned the Lati-

tudinarians the curious combination of accusations that they were "Pelagians," "Stoics," "Socinians," "Arminians," and "Papists." In their moral theology, as in their speculative theology, the Latitudinarians required that natural religion be the test and standard of revealed religion; and all those charges boil down to this, that in doing so, they "disparaged the Gospel," by making the precepts of Christianity practically indistinguishable from those of natural religion.

When Fowler, in his *Free Discourse*, attempted to exculpate the Latitudinarians from such a charge, his arguments really appear to have been more an affirmation than a rebuttal of it. There were, he explained, "two things concerning the Gospel, which do highly tend to the magnifying of it infinitely above any religion that was ever embraced by the sons of men."[26] The first was that the Bible was a convenient compendium of "all those excellent precepts, that are scattered here and there very thinly among much trash and rubbish in other books."[27] Whereas the pious heathen were required to expend much time and energy in discovering the duties of the moral law, Christians, on the other hand, needed only to read the Scriptures to gain such knowledge: they were thus saved from the consequences of being "too slothful to acquire the knowledge of our whole duty, by drawing inferences from premises, and gathering one thing from another; or too weak-headed to do this successfully."[28] And whereas the Jews under the Mosaic dispensation had had enjoined upon them many duties which were in themselves indifferent, by the Christian dispensation only those things were enjoined which were good in themselves. Secondly, and more important, Fowler added, the Gospel gives better helps, stronger inducements, and more compelling motives to goodness than men ever had before, because the New Testament contains the example of Jesus in doing good, unmistakable assurances of future rewards and punishments, and clear promises of supernatural assistance in the performance of duties.

By this scheme, revelation added nothing significant to the natural law, but merely summarized, reaffirmed, and republished it. But, as Fowler declared, this was hardly to derogate Christianity, for "to say that there is nothing required but what is most suitable to our rational faculties, tends as much to magnify God's goodness to us, and to commend the Gospel, as anything that can be said."[29] In fact, he added, were the Scriptures to contain any precepts which were entirely new and which had not previously occurred to reflective men, then it would be practically impossible to be certain that they were actually revealed by God, inasmuch as their "reasonableness . . . could not be at all, or not without great difficulty apprehended."[30] Those precepts of the Gospel which did not correspond exactly to the duties of natural religion, Fowler declared,

were "but few," and were only "imposed as *helps* to the performance" of the injunctions of the moral law.[31] They were thus "not required for themselves, but for the sake of the great essentials of religion."[32] And they were "none of them of a merely positive nature, except the two sacraments." Duties such as "meditation, prayer, reading and hearing God's word, the observance of the Lord's day, good conference," were "in themselves helps"; the two sacraments, though not so in themselves were "through the divine ordination . . . most excellent helps to the attaining of true holiness."[33] Even belief in Christ as savior and redeemer was not a positive, but a rational duty: given the New Testament as certified by reason, Fowler observed, no belief was more logical than this one, even "had there been no precept" to make it a duty.[34] In short, anything in Christianity which was not already part of the moral law was imposed merely to assist men in obeying the precepts of natural religion.* By this scheme it would appear that the "merely positive" duty of receiving the sacraments was of a lower order than the duties of the natural law; so that it is not astonishing that Tillotson emphatically affirmed as much when he solemnly warned mothers that their responsibility to nurse their own children, rather than giving them over to the care of wet-nurses, was "a more necessary and indispensible obligation than any positive precept of revealed religion."[35]

One can thus easily see how conservative Calvinists could call the Latitudinarians mere "Moral Preachers" who "make void the righteousness of faith, by establishing moral righteousness."[36] John Bunyan, for example, certainly had some cause to complain that Fowler's *Design of Christianity* proposed a system of morality "none other than the excellency and goodness that is of this world, such as in the first principles of it is common to heathens, pagans, Turks, infidels."[37] But the greatest objection of conservatives like Bunyan to the moral theology of the Latitudinarians was that they rejected the doctrine of absolute reprobation, and so were "men Popishly affected, and holding justification by works . . . persons utterly unacquainted with the great mystery of believing . . . that set themselves to cry up the power of nature, and to persuade their readers, that they are able to convert themselves, without being beholden to the divine grace."[38] On their part, the Latitudinarians were equally emphatic in asserting that predestinarianism such as that of the Synod of Dort implied a misapprehension about the nature of God

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* [Without realizing it, the Latitudinarians were suggesting an approach similar to that enunciated by Spinoza. Note, for example, Chapter XIII of the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, "It is Shown that Scripture Teaches Only Very Simple Doctrines, Such as Suffice for Right Conduct."—RHP]

which would, if it were true, render reason nugatory and ineffectual in religion, and so destroy the foundations of all religious certainty.

"The true notion of a God," Tillotson declared, is "infinite power conducted and managed by infinite wisdom and goodness."[39] Whereas the Calvinists' conception of God derived in large part from nominalism, which tended to emphasize God's power to the point where his goodness became almost obliterated by the blinding light of his omnipotence, the Latitudinarians had a conception of the interrelationship between the divine attributes which had been more or less characteristic of Thomistic scholasticism, but which they received more immediately from the Cambridge Platonists.[40] It was God's goodness that they emphasized. If God were not immutably good, Tillotson observed, all his other attributes "would change their nature, and lose their excellency." "Great power and wisdom would be terrible," he continued, "and raise nothing but dread and suspicion in us: for power without goodness would be tyranny and oppression, and wisdom would become craft and treachery. A being endued with knowledge and power, and yet wanting goodness, would be nothing else but an irresistible evil, and an omnipotent mischief."[41] Nothing can betray its own nature: God, therefore, being eternally "perfectly holy, wise, and good . . . cannot do anything so disbecoming or unworthy of these attributes"[42] as to decree a man's damnation from the beginning of time. The doctrine of absolute reprobation, the Latitudinarians thought, made "good and evil depend upon [God's] arbitrary will,"[43] unchecked by his goodness and mercy. But, as Glanvill wrote, God was "tied by the excellency of his being, to the laws of right, and just, and . . . there are independent relations of true and good among things, antecedent to all will and understanding."[44] If that were not the case, then good and evil would not be in themselves reflections of an eternal and immutable law of nature; consequently, reason, the means whereby that law is apprehended, was rendered absolutely worthless. And again, the Latitudinarians contended that it was only by reason that a revelation could be discerned. If God's nature were one of arbitrary voluntarism unregulated by goodness; if laws were *jus quia jussum* and not *jus quia justum*; then mankind's "natural sense" of the "self-evident notions of good and evil"[45] would be illusory or at best unreliable. Consequently, if the "goodness of the doctrine delivered is necessary to convince us, that it is of God,"[46] then no men could have any means whereby to judge whether or not the Scriptures were actually God's word, or, if that were established, whether or not the Scriptures were a tissue of lies. The Latitudinarians, then, considered the epistemological implications of predestinarianism to be such that if it "does not raze and

overturn the foundations of all religion, no opinion in the world tends to do so."[47]

It is worth notice in passing that the Latitudinarians' God was essentially a Whig monarch, with constitutional checks placed on his power by his other attributes. The Latitudinarians' intensely religious interpretation of the Glorious Revolution, and their prominent role in it, do not seem adequately explained by assigning to them the comparatively *ad hoc* (though certainly considerable) motivations of fear of Roman Catholicism and concern for the survival of the Church of England, and in fact suggest that their view of the Revolution may have been yet more deeply rooted in their religious outlook.[48] And indeed it was probably inevitable that their conception of the divine nature, which lay at the base of their epistemology and which was the cornerstone of their speculative and moral theology, should inform their conception of human government. With hindsight, we can see that the Latitudinarians' idea of God, given the political situation under James II, had revolutionary possibilities. The Latitudinarians subscribed to the ancient commonplace that, as Burnet put it, kings were "exalted for the good of their fellow creatures, in order to raise them to the truest sublimity, to become as like divinity as a mortal creature is capable of being."[49] From one's idea of God thus flows one's notion of what a king should be, for his virtues should be a mirror of God's. Hence Wilkins could say, quoting Seneca, that "the very nature of majesty does denote goodness," adding, "without this, governors may easily lose that reverence which is due to them from others, and consequently the authority which they ought to have over them. When they cease to be Gods in respect of their goodness, they will soon diminish in their power."[50] The Stuart monarchs would never have denied that a king must be good, but their kingship both in theory and practice stressed power, and we have seen that the Latitudinarians considered James II the epitome of unrestrained tyranny, intent on overturning law, whether divine, natural, or positive, by inflicting the "ambitious, crafty, perfidious, and . . . cruel spirit"[51] of popery on his subjects. James's supernatural model was thus not God but Satan, for as Fowler observed, what "makes the devils the most vile and hateful of all creatures [is] that they are spirits indeed with great strength and power, great knowledge, sagacity and quickness of understanding, and with large dominions, though usurped, but have lost that integrity of nature, and those good principles, whereby they should govern them."[52] Additionally, God's goodness became decidedly enlarged in the Latitudinarians' minds by the anthropomorphic kind of wishful thinking that induced Tillotson to pronounce him a God "in all respects such . . . as we would wish him to be."[53] If one adds to all this the Latitudinarians'

notion of the special status of the English Church and State in the designs of divine providence, it is not at all astonishing that they threw off the doctrine of divine right with such ease, and were so quick to observe in the Glorious Revolution the exceptionally gratifying, but nonetheless thoroughly natural and reasonable display of God's goodness and justice. Why should they have submitted to James's subversion of the divine, natural, and positive laws in which the true Protestant religion was grounded, when even the patriarch Abraham had not been obliged to accept God's specific command to sacrifice his son Isaac, without the implicit understanding that God would bring him back to life, or else that God's goodness would, at the last moment, not require or permit him to carry out a decree so irrational and so contrary to the law of nature?[54]

That the doctrine of absolute reprobation thus involved what the Latitudinarians considered a blasphemous idea of God's attributes, "greatly reflecting dishonor"[55] on his nature, was not their only objection to predestinarianism. The belief, Glanvill wrote, that God's grace, arbitrarily given, "changed the hearts of the elect by an immediate, irresistible power, and created faith, and other graces in them, in the same way of omnipotent operation," made the basis of religious certainty *au fond* subjective, and so led to the dangerous conceits of enthusiasm, fanaticism, and superstition.[56] Predestinarianism was also the mother of antinomianism. "Many whom I hope are good people would be better," Fowler said, "were it not for that doctrine: but I am certain that multitudes of wicked wretches are greatly hardened in their sins by it." Such men reasoned, he added, that there was no need for them to be good, "for their fate is determined; and that though holiness be necessary for happiness, God will sure enough, at one time or another make them holy; but if not, let them do what they can, he will not."[57]

According to Fowler, the Latitudinarians proposed as an alternative to absolute reprobation a curious compromise which he called the "middle way." It should, he said, please all parties, whether Calvinist or Arminian; for on the one hand it displayed God's will and power as unlimited and absolutely free, while on the other hand, it manifested fully his goodness and mercy, and avoided the danger of antinomianism. By this scheme of the "middle way," the salvation of some "singular and special favorites of God" was predestined and irresistible; the generality of men, however, must of their own free will cooperate by good works with God's grace in order to be saved.[58] In practical terms, of course, the "middle way" was a mere sop to doctrinaire Calvinists, for the "singular and special favorites of God" were few in number, and there was no test by which they could be distinguished (or distinguish themselves) from other men. So that in effect, the Latitudinarians' scheme of salvation re-

quired good works from everybody, and they explained the Eleventh Article of Religion which stated that "we are justified by faith only" in terms similar to Burnet's:

> Our faith and repentance are not the valuable considerations for which God pardons and justifies; that is done merely for the death of Christ; which God having out of the riches of his grace provided for us, and offered to us, justification is upon those accounts said to be *free:* There being nothing on our part which either did or could have procured it. But still our faith, which includes our hope, our love, our repentance, and our obedience, is the condition which makes us capable of receiving the benefits of this redemption and free grace.[59]

Similarly, Fowler said that the Latitudinarians defined justifying faith as "so full a persuasion, that Christ Jesus is the Savior of mankind, and that his Gospel is true, as causes a hearty and sincere willingness to yield obedience to all His precepts."[60] Thus they maintained that "imputed righteousness" was impossible without "inherent righteousness," and that God's grace was efficacious only by the cooperation of the human will. "Faith," in short, was "to be understood in a practical sense," as involving those moral actions which it had been the purpose of revelation to induce.[61] "In plain English," Tillotson said, "it is necessary for a man to be a good man, that he may get to heaven."[62]

The Latitudinarians' conception of "grace" must be watched as closely in their moral theology as in their speculative theology, because in one sense, justifying grace with them was similar to the "grace" involved in process of assent to Christian truths, in that it involved no superaddition to reason or nature. Fowler, for example, summarized God's part in mankind's salvation as follows:

> This is the Covenant that I [God] will make in the times of the Gospel; I will instead of those external and carnal ordinances, which the house of Israel has for a long time been obliged to the observance of, give them only such precepts as are most agreeable to their reason and understanding, and such as wherein they may discern essential goodness: and by this great expression of my grace to them, I shall not only convince them of their duty, but also, strongly incline them to the cheerful performance of it. . . . There shall be no need of such pains, in teaching men how they must obey the Lord, and what they are to do, as there was under the Law of Moses, (which consisted in observations that were only good because commanded, and had no internal goodness in them to commend them to the reason of men, and which might cause it to prompt them to them;) but the precepts now given, shall be found by every man in his own heart, so that none need be ignorant of what is enjoined for the substance of it, that will but consult the dictates of their own natures.[63]

Careful reading of this passage discloses that Fowler identified the "great expression of [God's] grace" with three related propositions. The first

was the favor God had bestowed on men by making the precepts of Christianity identical with the laws of nature. The second was that the Gospel was a republication of the natural law in an easily accessible form, so that men need not trouble themselves greatly to learn it. The third was that God had proposed certain means by which men could easily assent to and observe Christian precepts. The helps to assent were the inherent goodness of the doctrines, and their certification by miracles. The helps to observance were fourfold: (1) the conformity (once again) of Christian precepts to those of natural religion, which man has an instinctive propensity to perform; (2) a clear reinforcement of the sanctions of the law of nature regarding eternal rewards and punishments; (3) the example of Jesus in doing good; and (4) the promise of God's help in the form of supernatural grace.*

The last of these require further exploration. The "example of Jesus in doing good" was a favorite theme of the Latitudinarians' sermons, and nearly one-third of Fowler's *Design of Christianity* was devoted to it. From that book we learn Christ's "affability and courtesy," his "candor," "ingenuity," "gentleness," "meekness," "contempt of the world," "charity," "compassion," "patience," "submission to the divine will," and "love" and "trust" in God. Fowler was particularly impressed by Christ's display of "prudence," which was "the first of the primitive virtues,"[65] and which kept him from being a fanatic: "as great as was his zeal for the glory of God, and the good of men," Fowler observed, "it was not too strong for, or over-matched his reason; it was not a blind zeal; but he was very careful to give each of his actions their due circumstances."[66] *Plus docent exempla quam praecepta,* Fowler concluded: "Examples are the most natural and easy way of teaching, and they are so by reason of mankind's being so greatly addicted to imitation."[67] Jesus, thus portrayed, looked very much like a Stoic sage. To be sure, as Tillotson remarked in a sermon on the same topic, Christ "indeed had many advantages above us, being God as well as man,"[68] but the Latitudinarians tended to represent him primarily under his human aspects, and his virtues that they stressed were all in the natural rather than the supernatural order. It was inevitable that Bunyan should respond to the *Design of Christianity* by insisting that "it is blasphemy for any to presume to imitate" Christ,[69] and by observing that to do so, "is to make of him a Savior, not by sacrifice, but by example."[70]

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* [In contrast, those Christians who believed that the commandments given to Moses had not been cancelled by the Christian dispensation adopted more and more of the Judaic practices as part of their own observances, such as Sabbath observance, dietary laws, use of Hebrew as the holy language, etc.[64]—RHP]

The general import of Bunyan's accusation was correct, but his statement was not precise. It was true that the Latitudinarians often portrayed Christ's crucifixion as "a confirmation of his Gospel, a pattern of holy and patient suffering of death, and a necessary preparation for his resurrection, by which he gave us a clear proof of a resurrection, and by consequence of eternal life, as by his doctrine he had showed us the way to it."[71] But at the same time, they specifically insisted that such a construction of the crucifixion was inadequate and incomplete. Christ's death was also a vicarious atonement and sacrifice by which mankind could be reconciled to God through a "propitiation for the sins of the whole world."[72] Though their Christology was thus sufficiently orthodox, their conception of the atonement, traditionally one of the most richly mysterious doctrines of Christian theology, lacked any perplexing elements. "The wisdom of God thought fit to pitch upon this way and method of our salvation," Tillotson dispassionately explained, "and no doubt for very good reasons."[73] Three seemed "very obvious and very considerable" to him. First, "if sin had gone altogether unpunished," God's laws "would have been in great danger of falling into contempt," for if he had "proclaimed a general pardon of sin to all mankind without any testimony of his wrath and displeasure against it," then men might not believe that he was in "good earnest" in promulgating them. Second, God wanted to punish sin in a way that might effectively "discountenance and discourage it," which a general pardon would hardly have done. The third reason was one on which nineteenth-century anthropologists were to place a radically different interpretation: "a gracious condescension and compliance of Almighty God with a certain apprehension and persuasion" of mankind "concerning the expiation of sin and appeasing the offended deity by sacrifices," an idea of "the most universal reception" in all ages and times.[74] Thus while the Latitudinarians believed in the vicarious atonement, they rationalized it in such a way that the crucifixion was ultimately resolved into a device settled upon God in order to forgive men's sins in a fashion that re-emphasized the principle of natural religion that wickedness must be punished.

The crucifixion was the signal and seal of the Covenant between God and man. As we have seen, the Covenant was "not absolute and without conditions"; men must "perform what is enjoined them," or "they can have no part in it."[75] Besides the helps in the performance of Christian precepts inherent in the nature of the precepts themselves, and besides the aid given by the example of Jesus, the Latitudinarians thought that God provided further assistance to men in the form of "supernatural grace." This sort of grace was genuinely a superaddition to reason and nature. It had three aspects: (1) "preventing grace," which "puts good

motions into us, and excites and stirs us up to that which is good"; (2) "assisting grace," which "strengthens us in the doing of anything that is good"; and (3) "persevering grace," which "keeps us constant in a good course."[76] Such grace, of course, was available only to those who desired, concurred, and cooperated with it. Though, as we shall see, the Latitudinarians involved themselves in an inconsistency in doing so, they usually insisted that supernatural grace was absolutely necessary for men to be able to perform the conditions of the Covenant and so achieve heaven. "God considering the lapsed and decayed condition of mankind," Tillotson declared,

> sent his Son into the world, to recover us out of that sinful and miserable condition into which we were fallen, to reveal eternal life to us, and the way to it, and to purchase happiness for us, and to offer it to us upon certain terms and conditions to be performed by us: But we being weak and without strength, slaves to sin, and under the power of evil habits, and unable to free ourselves from this bondage by any natural power left in us, our Blessed Savior, in great pity and tenderness to mankind, has in his Gospel offered, and is ready to afford to us an extraordinary assistance of his grace and Holy Spirit, to supply the defects of our natural power and strength. And this supernatural grace of Christ is that alone, which can enable us to perform what he requires of us.[77]

The sacraments provided one occasion for the conferring of supernatural grace. "We do not doubt but that Christ, who instituted [the] sacraments, does still accompany them with a particular presence in them, and a blessing upon them," Burnet wrote, "so that we coming to them with minds well prepared, with pure affections and holy resolutions, do certainly receive in and with them particular largesses of the favor and bounty of God."[78] The Latitudinarians' Eucharistic doctrine was as imprecise as that advanced by the Book of Common Prayer; it appears to have been somewhat between Zwinglianism and Virtualism. But they distinctly preferred to think of the Holy Communion as an occasion of grace rather than as a channel of it. Since the sacraments were instituted primarily to "awaken men to a sense of their duty,"[79] they thought that preparation for the Eucharist, accompanied as it was by firm resolutions to do good and avoid evil, was the most effective aspect of the sacrament from the point of view of the graces it could convey.

But the Latitudinarians were unwilling to let supernatural grace, whether received with the sacraments or otherwise, remain *too* imponderable or mysterious, "extraordinary" though it was. Burnet, for example, admitted that God "may convey [grace] immediately to our souls, if he will"; but then he said,

> It is more intelligible for us to imagine that the truths of religion are by a divine direction imprinted deep upon our brain; so that naturally they must af-

> fect us much, and be oft in our thoughts: and this may be a hypothesis to explain regeneration or habitual grace by. When a deep impression is once made, there may be a direction from God, in the same way that his providence runs through the whole material world, given to the animal spirits to move towards and strike upon that impression, and so to excite such thoughts as by the law of the union of the soul and body do correspond to it: this may serve for a hypothesis to explain the conveyance of actual grace to us.[80]

Burnet did not maintain these conjectures with such vigor that he would have been willing to die at the stake for them, but it is quite clear that he preferred to conceive of supernatural grace as operating in the "same way that [God's] providence runs through the whole material world"; if such does not humanize and naturalize grace, it certainly tends to tame the inscrutable and superphysical elements usually associated with it in Christian theology.

The Latitudinarians thought that their belief in supernatural grace sufficiently vindicated them from the frequent charges of Pelagianism bestowed on them by conservative Calvinists.[81] As to the accusation that their soteriology was redolent of Romanism, Tillotson said that "a man ought not to be frightened out of the truth by any name," whether "Popish," "Socinian," or "Arminian."[82] Burnet admitted that mere terminology might be the chief difference between the Latitudinarians' doctrine of justification and that proposed by the Council of Trent.[83] But as he and the others saw it, the tendency of many Roman Catholic theologians was to assert that "obedience and good works are not only a condition of our justification, but a meritorious cause of it."[84] "I abhor [the doctrine of merit] as much as anyone," Tillotson declared, adding, however, that "if some also oppose the Papists about good works being a condition, I know nobody that thinks himself obliged to hold every opinion that any Protestant has maintained against the Papists."[85] It is certainly true that the Latitudinarians were closer to the various Catholic positions than they were to Calvin's, in which the good works of the unconverted natural man were but *peccata splendida;* in which the purpose of justifying grace was not to supplement nature, but to extinguish it or at least qualitatively to change it; and in which there was really no room for a system of ethics considered apart from the positive decrees of revelation.

To be saved, a man must be good, but must he be "orthodox"? Or to put it differently, what was the irreducible minimum of Christian belief necessary for salvation? On this question, the Latitudinarians did not display their usual candid explicitness. For three reasons, Fowler declared, they were "not at all forward" to give the world a "catalogue of fundamentals."[86] First, they thought that the Scriptures themselves were clear enough in setting forth essential beliefs. Second, what may be

essential for the salvation of one man might not be essential for the salvation of another; the Latitudinarians, Fowler wrote, "doubt not, but that according to men's various capacities, means of knowledge, and such like, the same points of faith may be to some fundamental, and to others not: I mean, may be necessary to be known, and explicitly believed by some, but not by others."[87] Third, they believed it was "sufficient for any man's salvation, that he carefully endeavor to understand [the Bible's] true meaning, so far as concerns his own duty, and to order his life accordingly."[88] If all these reasons are considered together, what Fowler seems to be saying is that a man needs to hold at least as many Christian doctrines as are necessary to induce goodness in him. In effect, the Latitudinarians identified "orthodoxy" with virtue: 'to believe' and 'to be obedient,' 'not to believe' and 'to be disobedient' were, Fowler said, "synonymous phrases and of the same signification in the New and likewise in the Old Testament."[89] Of the two, virtue was to be more highly prized, for orthodoxy was important chiefly as a means to it: "It is plain," Fowler declared, "that in the general those and those only are primarily and in their own nature fundamentals, which are absolutely necessary to accomplish [goodness] in us."[90] Consequently, the Latitudinarians, he said,

> can hope well of anyone, notwithstanding his mistakes, if they be not inconsistent with true goodness, and have no bad influence upon his practice. They are so persuaded of the graciousness of the divine nature, that they verily believe that *simple* errors shall be destructive to none, I mean, those which men have not contracted by their own default; and that where mistakes proceed not from evil affections, and an erring judgment from a corrupt heart, through the goodness of God, they shall not prove damnable. But that he will allow, and make abatements for the weakness of men's parts, their complexions, educations, and other ill circumstances, whereby they may be even *fatally* inclined to certain false persuasions.[91]

Thus to all intents and purposes, the Latitudinarians equated Christianity as a scheme of salvation with practical morality. Given their virtual identification of Christian morality with the natural moral law, it might appear that they considered no doctrine which was exclusively and characteristically Christian to be absolutely essential for salvation, provided that a man live a good life. It is, however, impossible to document such a suggestion; the Latitudinarians, for the reasons given above, deliberately did not draw up a list of fundamentals; and if, as Fowler asserted, some things are necessary for some but not for others, it would have been an equally unnecessary piece of magisterial imposition for them to have drawn up a full and complete list of non-fundamentals. Following the tradition of sixteenth-century Christian Humanism which they inherited from the Cambridge Platonists and especially from Falk-

land's circle, the Latitudinarians said that controversy among Christians about the truth of any doctrine was *prima facie* evidence that it was not clearly revealed in the Scriptures, and therefore was unnecessary for salvation. Hence they could specifically characterize such things as the Real Presence and notions of church government as doctrines in themselves inessential. But whether, for example, they considered that orthodox Trinitarianism, including belief in such doctrines as the Virgin Birth and the deity of Christ, were absolutely essential if a man could be virtuous without them, is problematical. It cannot be expected that they would have said so outright; but if they were logical, they did not think so.

Certainly they were logical in according salvation to the pious pagans.* If the only superadditions which Christianity made to the natural law were the two sacraments, which were of a less obligatory nature than the duties of natural religion; if salvation was contingent upon the performance of the conditions of the Covenant, which imposed no more in substance than "the moral law cleared and perfected";[92] and if Christian doctrines necessary for salvation were only such as produced obedience to that law—then it was logical for the Latitudinarians to expect to see "those excellent men, Socrates, Epictetus, and [Marcus Aurelius] Antoninus" in paradise.[93] "The law of nature being implanted in the hearts of men by God himself," Wilkins declared, "must therefore be esteemed to be as much his law, as any positive institution whatsoever: and consequently, conformity to it must in its kind, *in genere morum*, be acceptable to him."[94] Similarly, as Burnet observed, it was a reasonable conclusion from men's natural sense of God's goodness and justice that "those who make the best use of that small measure of light that is given them, shall be judged according to it; and that God will not require more of them than he has given them."[95] Fowler put it more bluntly: if the heathen are not saved, "it will be their own faults."[96] But all agreed that however God saved the virtuous infidels, it would somehow be through the merits of Christ, though they had not heard of him; precisely how such was to be accomplished, Fowler said that he was content to wait until Judgment Day to learn.[97]

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* [There were many discussions in the seventeenth century about the status of virtuous pagans that centered around the question of whether they could be saved without knowledge of the Gospel. The extreme form of the argument that they could was stated by Pierre Bayle in his claim that a society of atheists could be more moral than one of Christians. Bayle's reasons are similar to Fowler's: some religions are so naughty, and the practitioners of them so misled, that their moral behavior could be worse than that of benign atheists. Discussions of the morality of pagans and atheists are part of the general background of the time. —RHP]

It is obvious that the Latitudinarians' moral theology contained some inconsistencies, if not actual contradictions. The chief difficulty lay in their ambivalent attitude toward original sin. On the one hand, they held with Wilkins that the moral law was so pellucidly clear to natural reason that *"ignorantia juris"* can be no plea for transgressing it. On the other hand, they insisted that men's rational and ethical faculties had been so impaired by the Fall that Christ's mission was absolutely necessary for the republication and reaffirmation of the law of nature. Both positions cannot be held simultaneously. By holding them both at once, the Latitudinarians unconsciously expressed the fundamental dilemma of their moral theology. If Christianity was not "reasonable," that is, conformable to the natural law, then by their epistemological standards, it might not be true, or at any rate there would be no way of knowing whether it was true or false. But if Christianity was no more than natural religion, then it was really unnecessary. If, to the Latitudinarians' merging of Christian and natural precepts, one adds their theological minimalism, by which Christianity became virtually no more than a system of morality, and by which Christian doctrines were essential only insofar as they produced practical goodness, then the dilemma becomes all the more pronounced. In short, this system invited the use of Occam's razor; depending on how it was applied, it could produce Arianism, Socinianism, or Deism.

The chief factors in this dilemma were two: (1) the Latitudinarians reclassified what had previously been regarded as revealed precepts and supernatural virtues into the category of natural religion; and (2) in doing so, they changed the quality of those precepts and virtues. If Richard Hooker be taken as an example of traditional Anglican orthodoxy, it will be seen that, in general outline, the duties of a Christian man were much the same for him and for the Latitudinarians. Hooker held that revelation did not annul the natural law and indeed was itself "fraught with precepts" of natural religion.[98] But yet he insisted that to the moral law Christ had superadded other precepts, including the Sermon on the Mount and the supernatural virtues of faith, hope, and love.[99] The Latitudinarians, on the other hand, were so eager to demonstrate the reasonableness of Christianity that in effect they classified those superadditions as part of the natural law itself. So intent were they on grounding Christianity in natural religion that by the time they had finished constructing the rational foundations of Christian morality, they had almost no materials left over for the superstructure.

To be sure, the Latitudinarians continued to insist upon the traditional doctrine that supernatural grace was necessary for the performance of duties necessary for salvation. But given their soteriology as a whole, such grace lost much of its character as a unique and characteristic com-

ponent of the Christian dispensation. If the pious heathen can attain salvation, they do so with supernatural grace or without it; in any event one does not need to be a Christian to be saved. Tillotson thought that God did give supernatural grace to a few heathen;[100] but if, as Fowler said, "belief" is "obedience," then "obedience" in its kind must be sufficient "belief," so that one could just as easily conclude that God's grace was equally available to all those who did their best to follow the law of nature. In fact, grace might not be necessary at all, if Burnet's statement that God required no more than that a man live up to his own light is forced to its logical conclusion. We will recall that the Latitudinarians often identified other forms of "grace" with "reason" or "nature," and that Burnet even made inroads on the extraordinary quality of supernatural grace by suggesting that it worked by the ordinary rules of divine providence which sustained the entire operations of the material world. There is consequently here another opportunity for the application of Occam's razor by those who might wish to conclude that reason and nature are grace enough, or that traditional Christianity is an unnecessary hypothesis by which to explain grace.

The tendency of the Latitudinarians' moral theology was not only to impugn the uniqueness and necessity of the Christian dispensation; it was also to humanize God and to secularize religion. The *rex tremendae majestatis* of the poet and the *Deus absconditus* of the Calvinist become a God "in all respects . . . such as we would wish him to be," giving men "reasonable laws . . . suitable to our nature and advantageous to our interest."[101] This incessant equating of "duties" with "interests" betrays a hard core of utility in the Latitudinarians' religious thought. It was a venerable commonplace of Christian theology that God and heaven were the supernatural ends of man which completed human nature, and that man's actions should therefore be designed to achieve those ends. But it is one thing to say with Augustine, "Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our hearts will not rest until they rest in thee"; it is a completely different thing to observe, as Wilkins did, that the nature of man consists in that faculty whereby "he is made capable . . . of apprehending a deity, and of expecting a future state of rewards and punishments." The Cambridge Platonists, who had taught the Latitudinarians much of their theology, had failed to pass on to them the tone and quality of their thought: for the Latitudinarians, God was not primarily the font of all sweetness and delight, desired for himself because the contemplation of the beatific vision was the ecstatic completion of all human faculties and potentialities; he was instead chiefly a dispenser of rewards and punishments. With the Latitudinarians, the three supernatural virtues of faith, hope, and love often appear to be merely a judicious assent to rational

evidences, combined with a rather selfish prudence about gaining heaven because hell was painful. And even some of the rewards of heaven they translated to earth. Wilkins informs us that not only did virtue conduce to eternal rewards, but that in this world it produced happiness, health, tranquillity, riches, honor, and a good reputation.[102] So great were the temporal advantages of religion that Fowler remarked, "Were there no other reward to be hoped for but what daily attends [our duties], it would be unquestionably our interest to walk in them."[103] It was certainly not new for seventeenth-century divines to point out the worldly advantages of virtue; but the Puritans who had made so much of that theme were usually more careful than the Latitudinarians in pointing out that prosperity was a mere by-product of true religion. The different emphasis accorded this aspect of the Latitudinarians' thought by the totality of their ethical system thus exhibits distinct intimations of the prudential morality of the eighteenth century.

It is possible, then, to see how the Latitudinarians' moral theology could merge with the heterodoxies of the eighteenth century, and indeed, even contribute to them. The Latitudinarians themselves would have been astonished at the inferences that would be drawn from their interpretation of the design of Christianity. But orthodox though they remained, their moral theology, in combination with their speculative theology, clearly marks them as transitional figures between traditional Christianity and eighteenth-century Deism. Yet one ought to consider them from the point of view of what they deliberately tried to do, as well as from the standpoint of what they inadvertently did. They wanted to make men good. Their success therein cannot be measured, but certainly their own lives were models of what they enjoined. And in a time of religious controversy and turmoil, they adjured Neptune to raise his *"placidum caput"* above the waves by encouraging men to measure Christianity not in terms of opinions but in terms of goodness. For reason and virtue, they thought, were not just the chief designs of the Gospel and the means of salvation; they were also, as we shall see, the means whereby English Protestants could achieve the spirit of unity in the bond of peace.

To this irenical aspect of their thought we will soon turn. Before doing so, however, we must briefly examine what they considered a major instrument in their attempts both to promote the "design of Christianity" and to bring religious concord to England: their distinctive sermon style. We have seen that the sermon was the chief means employed by the Latitudinarians in their attempts to reform men's lives. It is well known that what has been called the "stylistic revolution" inaugurating the beginning of "modern" English prose during the Restoration period was the result of the convergence of many factors, chief among them science, ra-

tionalism, and neo-Stoicism.[104] It is also well known that the Latitudinarians, who were rationalists, neo-Stoics, and to a large degree associated with the new science, were mainly responsible for the reformation of pulpit oratory during their period. Since the sermon was the chief form of literary expression in the seventeenth-century, and the most influential, because it was the main source of popular entertainment and edification, the Latitudinarians thus deserve an important place in the history of language and literature. Such has in fact been accorded them by literary historians, but usually as individuals, not as a group.[105] What has too often been overlooked is that the Latitudinarians regarded their distinctive sermon style as a characteristic note of their set: on that point Fowler, Glanvill, and Burnet were most emphatic.[106] The reformed preaching style was not unique to them, but generally speaking, they can be called its initiators, and without question they were its most prominent and most effective popularizers. We are not here concerned, however, with their place in the history of literature, but rather with their sermon style as an adjunct of their moral theology, for they developed and used it the better to teach "true, practical divinity," displaying "the rules of life that are practicable, and such as sort with the plain precepts of the Gospel."[107]

The old sermon style, which was dominant at the time of the Restoration but which had almost disappeared in the Established Church by the Revolution, was characterized by ostentatious pedantry, lengthy quotations from classical authors, use of elaborate metaphors and similes, and clever plays on words and phrases, all frequently accompanied by extravagant forensic gestures. The sermons of the Latitudinarians were "clear, plain, and short."[108] Avoiding all literary artifices, particularly metaphors, they organized their sermons methodically, dividing them into clearly-defined subtopics, and concluding them with a summary and application. They spoke simply and earnestly, in normal and familiar tones.

Their advocacy of the reformed sermon style signalized their affiliations with the Royal Society and the new science. According to Sprat, the Fellows of the Royal Society studied

> to reject all the amplifications, digressions, and swellings of style: to return back to the primitive purity, and shortness, when men delivered so many *things*, almost in an equal number of *words*. They have exacted from their members, a close, naked, natural way of speaking; positive expressions; clear senses; a native easiness; bringing all things as near the mathematical plainness, as they can.[109]

This could just as well be a description of the Latitudinarians' sermon style. The circles of the Latitudinarians and of the *virtuosi* overlapped,

but if the groups are considered separately, it is worth noting that each group independently strove for a purification of literary expression. John Wilkins was the presiding genius behind the efforts of both groups. His *Essay toward a Real Character and a Philosophical Language,* which was commissioned by the Royal Society and in the preparation of which he was assisted by Tillotson and Lloyd, was not just an attempt to create a language which would "mightily conduce to the spreading and promoting of all arts and sciences"; it was also intended to allay the intensity of religious controversy. As Wilkins wrote,

> This design will likewise contribute much to the clearing of some of our modern differences in religion, by unmasking the wild errors, that shelter themselves under the disguise of affected phrases; which being philosophically unfolded, and rendered according to the genuine and natural importance of words, will appear to be inconsistencies and contradictions. And several of those pretended, mysterious and profound notions, expressed in great swelling words, whereby some men set up their reputation, being this way examined will appear to be, either nonsense, or very flat and jejune.[110]

Wilkins was the first divine in England consistently to use the new style in writing and preaching.[111] As early as 1647, his *Ecclesiastes* laid down the rules for the "plain, full, wholesome affectionate" style[112] which was to become characteristic of the Latitudinarians. Underlying the efforts both of the Latitudinarians and of the Royal Society were essentially utilitarian motives: the Royal Society wanted a language that would encourage practical scientific results rather than theoretical conjectures and disputations; the Latitudinarians wanted a style which would induce practical piety, and which at the same time would discourage unnecessary and fruitless theological speculation.

The Latitudinarians' method of preaching was a logical result of their conception of human psychology. "I have been taught," Patrick wrote, "that there are two ways to come to the affections: one by the senses and imagination; and so we see people mightily affected with a puppet-play, with a beggar's tone, with a lamentable look, or anything of like nature." The other way, he added, "is by the reason and judgment; when the evidence of any truth convincing the mind, engages the affections to its side, and makes them move according to its direction."[113] The Latitudinarians' neo-Stoic distrust of imagination was everywhere obvious in their indignant denunciations of the first way of preaching and their earnest advocacy of the second. In their opinion, the first way was the one generally followed by Dissenters and sectaries, and at its worst was the mother of enthusiasm and the nurse of fanaticism. Furthermore, they were convinced that in the long run, any good resolutions induced by appeals to men's non-rational faculties were ephemeral and transitory, and therefore ineffectual to living a genuinely good life. Wilkins strikingly illus-

trated such a concern in a discussion of martyrdom. A martyr who dies for the love of God, Wilkins declared, does so either because he is firmly and rationally convinced of the truth of religion, or else because his imagination and passions have carried him away. The same man who on one day would be willing to burn at the stake in a "fit of devotion" because of his "passionate sensitive love," might the next day become "an apostate, and renouncer and blasphemer of religion," because his love for God had not been properly lodged in "the rational part of the soul."[114] If men were to be really good, therefore, and constant in their virtue, the Latitudinarians thought that it was their rational judgment that must be appealed to, not the shifting whims of their lower faculties.

It was the metaphor, which was a creature of the imagination, that the Latitudinarians disliked most, because they thought that it confused any issue under consideration, and so led to uncharitable and unnecessary controversies. As Tillotson remarked,

> After a man has delivered the simple notion of a thing in proper words, he may afterward illustrate it by metaphors: but then these are not to be insisted upon, and strained to the utmost extent of the metaphor, beyond what the true notion of the thing will bear: for if consequences once come to be drawn from metaphors, and doctrines founded, and theories built upon them, instead of illustrating the thing, they blind and obscure it, and serve to no other purpose, but to seduce and mislead the understandings of men, and to multiply controversies without end.[115]

Particularly was this true, Tillotson thought, of the crucial subject of justifying faith, on which there were "at least twenty several opinions among the Protestants" which prevented that true concord which ought to exist among Christians. All such differences, he thought, would be obliterated, if men would only speak in clear English, contenting "themselves with those plain and simple descriptions, which the Scripture gives," instead of inventing confusing metaphors and figurative phrases, such as "resting," "relying," and "leaning" upon Christ.[116] The Latitudinarians' sermon style was thus not only an instrument to make men good; it was, as they saw it, also an irenical device which could potentially make men one in the Lord, and help heal the breaches in a divided English Christendom, because it was designed to be a clear and simple vehicle conveying as forcefully as possible the chief theme of their sermons: that "religion consists not in knowing many things, but in practising the few plain things we know."[117] For, as Glanvill earnestly told the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London in 1669, "If Christians would take this [design of Christianity] to be their business, and consciously apply themselves to it; they would find work enough in their own hearts to employ them, and neither have time, nor occasion to pry into the infirmities of others, nor inclination to quarrel with them."[118]

CHAPTER TEN

CHARITY AND RUBRICS

The Latitudinarians' policy on church government and liturgy followed logically from the minimalism of their moral theology. Since they believed that the chief purpose of the Gospel was to make men good, and that "the greatest heresy in the world is a wicked life";[1] since they thought that "the necessary principles of faith lie in a little room,"[2] and that doctrines which did not directly affect practical morality were extraessentials consisting of "small things, the tithing of mint and anise and cummin"[3]—it was inevitable that they should declare that particular forms of church government and worship were in themselves mere "appendages of religion,"[4] being "things alterable, and in their own nature indifferent."[5]

Such ideas, however, may be put into practice in two completely different ways. The first could lead to political toleration and to a congregational ecclesiastical polity. The second could result in an insistence that certain forms of church organization be adhered to, and specific rituals followed, because national uniformity in such matters, while indifferent to salvation, was nevertheless essential for public order and religious concord. It was this second line of thought which the Latitudinarians followed. In its broad outlines, there was nothing novel in their position, which had long been, *mutatis mutandis*, the settled policy of the Church of England, and which had received its classic formulation in Richard Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. What set the Latitudinarians apart from most of their coreligionists was that they combined loyalty to the episcopal constitution and worship of the Church with an intense irenic drive: more than any other contemporary group in the Church of England, they sought to bring Dissenters into the Church by interpreting liberally the requirements of uniformity, and, wherever possible, by attempting to change those requirements, in order to accommodate the scruples of tender consciences. By such activities, the Latitudinarians carried into the Restoration and Revolution periods the heritage of the thought of Great Tew and of Cambridge Platonism, which in turn was grounded in the irenicism of the Erasmian Humanism of the sixteenth century.

We have already, in discussing the Latitudinarians, met with the main outlines of Erasmian Christianity. Erasmus, like the Latitudinarians, believed that charity, not 'orthodoxy,' was the purpose of religion.

Religion, he said, consisted "not merely in ceremonies and articles, but in the heart and the whole life."[6] What was essential to salvation, Erasmus thought, could be found clearly enough in the Bible: and a "compendium of the entire philosophy of Christ," derived from "the purest sources of the Evangelists and Apostles," would, he said, produce articles of faith very few in number.[7] On these, Christians should agree, and in other matters, avoid the uncharitable dogmatizing that could only lead to division and confusion. "Our religion," Erasmus insisted, "is summed up in peace and harmony."[8] Such humanism was the informing principle of the thought of the Cambridge Platonists. Ernst Cassirer has traced their intellectual origins through the Oxford Humanists of the sixteenth century to the Neo-Platonism of the Florentine Academy, and the Erasmian strain in their thought was reinforced by their knowledge of the writings of Falkland's circle, as well as by their close connections with the Dutch Remonstrants.[9] For the Platonists, creeds were nothing if they did not become deeds: "To estimate the fruit of virtue by that imaginary knowledge of it which is acquired by mere definition," Henry More declared, "is very much the same as if one were to estimate the nature of fire from a fire painted on the wall. . . . If you have ever *been* this, you have *seen* this."[10] John Smith concurred, writing, "He that is the most practical in divine things, has the purest and sincerest knowledge of them, and not he that is most dogmatical. . . . When the tree of knowledge is not planted by the tree of life, and sucks not up sap from thence, it may be as well fruited with evil as with good, and bring forth bitter fruit as well as sweet."[11] True religion, they said, did not consist in institutions, "in a system of propositions," nor in "certain images, performances and forbearances."[12] Since the essence of religion was morality, and "all other things in religion are in order to [that]";[13] since the Bible is sufficiently clear in the few things necessary for salvation, and since no man can possibly believe anything that his reason does not declare to him to be true; then no man ought to be coerced in his beliefs or inconvenienced for his opinions. "Religion," Whichcote said, "which is a bond of union, ought not to be a ground of division; but it is in an unnatural use when it does disunite. Men cannot differ by true religion, because it is true religion to agree. The spirit of religion is a reconciling spirit."[14]

At Great Tew, no name was more highly honored than that of Erasmus. Falkland's group also showed perceptible influence from such men as Sebastian Castellio and Jacobus Acontius, whose most significant contribution to the Erasmian tradition was the emphasis they placed on the distinction between fundamentals and non-fundamentals in religion.[15] Such a distinction is essential to any irenic minimalism. Erasmus had

been comparatively vague on what articles of faith he considered essential for salvation, and it was left to others to elaborate on this aspect of his thought. Castellio's *De Haereticis* (1554) was specifically intended as a protest against Calvin's execution of Michael Servetus for anti-Trinitarianism in 1533, but it was also at the same time an outraged plea against the persecution of "heresy" in general, whether by Catholics or Protestants. "The way by which we may come to Christ," Castellio wrote, "is to correct our lives."[16] It was, he said, sinful to engage in unchristian disputes about such things as the Trinity, predestination, free will, and other such speculative matters "which do not need to be known for salvation," and which did not in themselves make a man a better man, nor bring him closer to God.[17] "Religion," he declared,

> does not consist in some point which transcends human understanding and concerning which we have no indisputable passage of Scripture, as for example, in the understanding of the three persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is enough for us to believe that there is one substance in three persons without bothering ourselves unduly as to how one is related to the other. We need not worry whether the body of Christ is in heaven, whether God has created some to be damned and others to be saved, how Christ descended into hell, and the like. On these points each may be left to his own opinion and to the revelation of the Savior. It is sufficient to accept the fundamental points of true religion which consists in believing that God is the source of all good, that man is condemned because of the disobedience of the first man and saved by the obedience of the second, who is Jesus Christ our Savior, provided a man, moved by the true fear of God, repent of his former evil life and resolve firmly not to return to it again. . . . In a word, we are the servants of Him whom we obey. If of sin then we are of all men the most miserable, even though we believe the twelve articles of the faith, and agree with the whole Church in doctrine and ceremonies, and attend church diligently.[18]

Acontius contended that not only was dissension over such points unchristian, but that it was actually the means by which Satan contrived to rend the seamless robe of Christ. His *Satanae Strategemata* (1565) brought the distinction between fundamentals and adiaphora to a new level of precision. "These very few points are all that we can find expressed in Scripture," he declared,

> as being necessary for every man to believe, to the end that he may be saved: That he acknowledge the one only true God and him whom he has sent, Jesus Christ his Son, being made man: and that he believe that God has raised him from the dead, and that by his name he shall obtain salvation, and that he place not his righteousness in the works of the law: but that he be verily persuaded, that there is no other name under heaven, whereby he can be saved.[19]

The circle at Great Tew, confronted with the religious conflicts in England which finally led to the Civil War, were passionate in their pleas that men observe the difference between fundamentals and matters indifferent, observing Christian unity in the first, and Christian charity in the other. Referring his readers to Acontius' *Satanae Strategemata*, Chillingworth wrote in *The Religion of Protestants*,

> This presumptuous imposing of the senses of men upon the words of God, the special senses of men upon the general words of God, and laying them upon men's consciences together, under the penalty of death and damnation; this vain conceit that we can speak of the things of God, better than in the word of God: this deifying our own interpretations, and tyrannous enforcing them upon others; this restraining of the word of God from that latitude and generality, and the understandings of men from that liberty, wherein Christ and the Apostles left them, is, and has been, the only foundation of all the schisms of the Church, and that which makes them immortal: the common incendiary of Christendom, and that which . . . tears into pieces, not the coat, but the bowels, and members of Christ.[20]

Similarly, John Hales of Eton inquired, "How is it possible that any man, that is careful to study and believe the Scripture, should be ignorant of any necessary part of his faith?"[21] The Bible, not human formularies, was the religion of the Protestants. "Require of Christians only to believe Christ, and to call no man master but him only," Chillingworth pleaded. "Take away tyranny, and restore Christians to their just and full liberty of captivating their understanding to Scripture only, and as rivers when they have a free passage, run all to the ocean, so it may well be hoped, by God's blessing, that universal liberty, thus moderated, may quickly reduce Christendom to truth and unity."[22] For their troubles, Falkland and Chillingworth died in the Civil War, in which, as Chillingworth had bitterly declared, "all the scribes and Pharisees were on one side and all the publicans and sinners on the other."[23] But the irenical spirit of Great Tew survived in the writings of Henry Hammond, whose *Reasonableness of Christian Religion* (1650), *Of Fundamentals* (1654), *Of Schism* (1654), and *Discourse on Heresy* (1656), all were written in hope that God would "inspire continually the universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity and concord, and grant that all they that do confess his holy name, may agree in the truth of his holy word, and live in unity and godly love."[24]

From both the circle at Great Tew and from the Cambridge Platonists, the Latitudinarians imbibed the elements of their irenicism. But though the substance of their thought was thus basically Christian Humanism, the Latitudinarians read Hooker as carefully as they did Chillingworth; and the form and guise in which that substance manifested itself was fundamentally that of the *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, which Tillotson called a "deservedly admired book,"[25] and from the principles of which

Burnet said that he never departed.[26] *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* was the high point in the Anglican Church's defense of its organization and liturgy against such sixteenth-century Puritans as Walter Travers and Thomas Cartwright, who held that episcopacy and certain ceremonial usages prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer ought to be abandoned, either because they were not explicitly enjoined in the Bible, or because they were remnants of Popery from which the Church must be cleansed. Many of the specific arguments of the *Ecclesiastical Polity* were not new, and were, in fact, standard defenses of Anglican practices. But as C. S. Lewis has observed, "the *Polity* marks a revolution in the art of controversy. Hitherto, in England, that art had involved only tactics; Hooker adds strategy."[27] Hooker realized that the Puritans' objections to the Established Church involved not just particular points of organization and ceremony, but raised the fundamental and encompassing question of the nature of law itself. To that question, therefore, he addressed himself, relying heavily on scholastic philosophy, particularly on the legal theories of Thomas Aquinas.

The eternal law of God, Hooker wrote, had two aspects. The first law eternal was "that order which God before all ages has set down with himself, for himself to do all things by."[28] The second law eternal was God's law for his creatures, and consisted of the celestial law for angels, and the natural law for men. To men also God has promulgated the divine law, the supernatural revelation of the Scriptures. Human law, Hooker said, derived on the one hand from natural law as discovered by the light of reason, and on the other hand from the divine law of the Bible. The divine law does not extinguish natural law, but supplements it; since both are aspects of the same eternal law, they are homologous. Natural and divine law are unchanging and immutable; but human law, which is the application of both to particular times and circumstances, and which contains, for order and convenience, many precepts indifferent to both, is by its nature to be altered as necessity dictates.

For Hooker, church government and liturgy were matters of human law. Organizational discipline, and decent and orderly worship were required both by divine and natural law, but the particular forms they took were not prescribed by either. The Church therefore had been left free discretion as to its constitution and ceremonies; and these, being inessential to salvation, could legitimately be different at different times and in different societies. Society for Hooker was both a civil and religious entity: the Church was the State at prayer, and a nation "as a politic society maintains religion; as a Church maintains that religion which God has revealed by Jesus Christ."[29] In England, the law-making body of the national society was the King with Parliament; together they had the right

to determine the structure and usages of the Church, since adiaphora must be regulated by human law. Such regulation was necessary for civil stability, and in order to produce that religious order and tranquillity necessary for the peaceful and untroubled national worship of God. To dissent from the dispositions of the Church in such matters, then, was a piece of arrogance: the Church imposed nothing contrary to divine or natural law, and it proposed conformity not as necessary for salvation, but only as necessary for the peace of society. Furthermore, Hooker continued, the usages of the Church of England were in themselves desirable. Besides being wholly legitimate, they had the advantages of antiquity, beauty, and time-proven convenience and efficiency.

To summarize Hooker is to anticipate the broad outlines of the Latitudinarians' position on the ecclesiastical polity. They were willing, as true disciples of the Cambridge Platonists and Great Tew, to think well of the salvation of all good men; and Tillotson, in a letter to William Penn, expressed admirably their private attitude toward Nonconformists. "I have ever endeavored," he wrote "to make it one of the governing principles of my life, never to abate anything of humanity and charity to any man for his difference from me in opinion."[30] But when they acted in their public capacity as Anglican ministers and bishops, they sought to promote uniformity and order in the National Church; and things being what they were, that meant conformity to the Church of England as by law established, with its episcopal constitution, its Articles of Religion, and its Book of Common Prayer.

Fundamental to their conception of the Church was an assumption ultimately derived from medieval political theory which we have seen with Hooker and which remained a commonplace throughout the seventeenth century: that Church and State were but different aspects of the same national society. National Churches in general, Stillingfleet explained, were

> the Churches of such nations, which upon the decay of the Roman Empire, resumed their just right of government to themselves, and upon their owning Christianity, incorporated into one Christian society, under the same common ties and rules of order and government. . . . Thus National Churches are national societies of Christians, under the same laws of government and rules of worship. For the true notion of a Church is no more than of a society of men united together for their order and government according to the rules of the Christian religion.[31]

As to the Church of England in particular, it was, in the "diffusive" sense, "the whole body of Christians in the nation, consisting of pastors and people, agreeing in the faith, government and worship, which are established by the laws of this realm."[32] It was established by law, "because it was received by the common consent of the whole nation in

Parliament, as other laws of the nation are; and is universally received by all that obey those laws."[33] In the "representative" sense, the Church of England was comprised of "the bishops and presbyters of this Church, meeting together according to the laws of this realm, to consult and advise about matters of religion."[34] National consent, Stillingfleet said, was necessary to make a National Church; and when the "representative" Church made its judgments in Convocation, and those judgments were "received, allowed and enacted by the King and three estates of the kingdom," then "there is as great a national consent as is required to any law."[35] Such a Church as this, Stillingfleet continued, "has power to appoint rules of order and decency not repugnant to the word of God, which on that account others are bound to submit to; and to take such care of its preservation, as to admit none to its privileges but such as do submit to them." Additionally, upon those who disturb the peace of the Church (and therefore of the State), "the civil magistrate may justly inflict civil penalties."[36]

It was upon such legal, prudential, and rational grounds that the Latitudinarians defended episcopacy, the Articles of Religion, and the Book of Common Prayer. As to episcopacy, none of them regarded it as *jure divino*, so that technically speaking, it was alterable, if alteration were necessary and justifiable. The most systematic Latitudinarian work on church government was Stillingfleet's *Irenicum*, published in 1661, before the precise status of Presbyterians under the restored regime in Church and State had been determined. It was inevitable that episcopacy in some form would be re-established, but many thought that it might be a "tempered episcopacy," to which the more moderate of the Presbyterians would be able to submit. Stillingfleet's purpose in writing the *Irenicum* was to "remove the violent prejudices of the Dissenting party against episcopal government,"[37] while at the same time proposing such a scheme of "tempered episcopacy." This book deserves careful attention, because though Stillingfleet later retracted parts of it, the general principles which he laid down in it on church government remained those characteristic of all the Latitudinarians, and show strikingly the influence of Hooker upon them. For the *Irenicum* was fundamentally an attempt to apply the general principles of the *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* to a specific religious and political situation prevailing in England from the Restoration to the passage of the new Act of Uniformity in 1662.

The divine law of the Scriptures, and the natural law, Stillingfleet asserted, were by nature immutable. The unalterable principles of natural law upon which church government was founded were six: (1) that there must be a society of men for the worship of God; (2) that this society must be maintained and governed in a fashion most convenient for

peace, edification, and stability; (3) that it must be so constituted that the worship of God was conducted in a grave and solemn manner; (4) that it must be so organized that controversies breaking its peace might be efficiently settled; (5) "that all that are admitted into this society, must consent to be governed by the laws and rules of it";[38] and (6) that "every offender against the laws of this society is bound to give an account of his actions to the governors of it, and submit to the censures inflicted upon him by them."[39] To such a degree does natural law determine the constitution of a Church; how far does divine law determine it? Stillingfleet declared that neither in the Scriptures nor in the Church Fathers could he find any incontrovertible evidence that Christ or the Apostles had ordained any one particular form of church government. The only divine commission regarding polity was a reaffirmation of natural law, requiring that "there must be *some* form of government in the Church," maintained by a ministry ordained for that purpose, in order to preserve and propagate the Gospel.[40] Consequently, "the Church of Christ is left to its own liberty for the choice of its form of government, whether by an equality of power in some persons, or superiority and subordination of one order to another."[41] Hence neither the presbyterian nor the episcopalian system was *jure divino*, either being permissible if established by law. In support of his assertions, Stillingfleet quoted, among others, Hooker, Hales, and Chillingworth. "They who please but to consult the third Book of learned and judicious Mr. Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*," he wrote, "may see the mutability of the form of church government largely asserted and fully proved."[42] Hale's *Concerning Schism and Schismatics* was adduced to demonstrate that "all difference between church officers [arises] from consent of parties, not from any divine law."[43] And Chillingworth was cited in support of "the very thing I have been so long in proving of," that "no one form of church government is necessary to the being of a church, but that a good and peaceable Christian may and ought to conform himself to the government of the place where he lives."[44] Ideally, Stillingfleet thought, that government ought to be as close as possible to primitive Christian practice. For himself, he would not say precisely what that was, but in broad outline it included "the restoring of the Presbyteries of the several churches, as the senate to the Bishop, with whose counsel and advice all things were done in the primitive Church."[45] But in any event, as he concluded, "Let men's judgments be what they will concerning the primitive form, seeing it has been proved, that the form does not bind unalterably and necessarily, it remains that the determining of the form of government is a matter of liberty in the Church; and what is so, may be determined by lawful author-

ity; and what is so determined by that authority, does bind men to obedience."[46]

In later years, as Burnet wrote, "the writing of the *Irenicum* was a great snare" to Stillingfleet, and he "retracted" it.[47] Stillingfleet did not in fact retract his basic premises, but only some of his conclusions. In the *Irenicum*, for example, he had declared that episcopacy could not unquestionably be ascertained to have been of apostolic institution; later, he said that there was as much evidence of its apostolic authority as there was that St. Paul had written the epistles ascribed to him.[48] The *Irenicum*'s scheme of "tempered episcopacy" was advanced as being, in Stillingfleet's opinion, closest to primitive Christian practice; later he affirmed that the English diocesan episcopacy was "the same in substance which was in the primitive Church."[49] But though he thus admitted that youth and inexperience had led him to yield "too far in hopes of gaining the Dissenting parties to the Church of England,"[50] he never retracted his opinion that episcopacy was *jure humano* and was therefore, in itself, mutable.

Though Stillingfleet and the other Latitudinarians thus did not consider episcopacy *per se* to have any supernatural sanctions, or non-episcopal Churches to be heterodox on that account alone, they nevertheless consistently and on a number of accounts expressed a decided preference for it above all other alternatives. First, as with Hooker, its antiquity commended it. The Latitudinarians, Fowler said, thought that episcopacy was universal in the Church at the latest "presently after the Apostles' times, and therefore it is very probable that it was also in their days: it being hardly conceivable, that so great an alteration as that of presbyterian, or congregational, to episcopal government, could in a little time have prevailed over all the world, and have continued for so many ages together, if it had been otherwise."[51] When the Latitudinarians stressed the antiquity of episcopacy, they were not arguing from authority; instead, they were countering the contentions of Nonconformists that history supported an interpretation of the Scriptures in favor of non-episcopal models of church government.

Second, episcopacy was the form in which Christianity had first come to Britain, and therefore, as Tenison observed, it suited Englishmen "whose genius renders them tenacious of their ancient customs."[52] Some Presbyterians held that ancient British Christianity had not, in fact, been episcopal. To refute them, Lloyd published his *Historical Account of Church Government, as it was in Great Britain and Ireland, when they first received the Christian Religion* (1684); Stillingfleet answered objections to Lloyd's book in *Origines Britannicae; or, the Antiquities of the British Churches* (1685). Here again, the central idea was not that history bound

England to episcopacy, but that it did not support Presbyterianism or Congregationalism. Third, the Latitudinarians valued the principles of subordination implicit in episcopacy, which rendered it "agreeable to the scheme of the monarchy,"[53] and which made for stability, convenience, and efficiency. They agreed, Fowler said, with Chillingworth, who had declared that if "we abstract from episcopal government all accidentals, and consider only what is essential and necessary to it, we shall find in it no more than this:

> an appointment of one man of eminent sanctity and sufficiency to have the care of all the churches, within a certain precinct or diocese, and furnishing him with authority, (not absolute or arbitrary, but regulated and bounded by laws, and moderated by joining to him a convenient number of assistants) to the intent, that all the churches under him may be provided of good and able pastors: and that both of pastors and people, conformity to laws, and performance of their duties, may be required, under penalties not left to discretion, but by law appointed.[54]

Thus like Chillingworth, and unlike the Laudians, the Nonjurors, and most High Churchmen, the Latitudinarians did not attribute to the nature of episcopacy a difference so much of quality as of function: consecration left no indelible mark on a bishop's soul, but simply authorized him to perform certain administrative tasks.

Fundamental to all these theoretical defenses of episcopacy was the Latitudinarians' realization that, practically speaking, the establishment in England of any alternative form of church polity was unlikely, so that political harmony and religious concord required a protection of the *status quo*. After 1662, such far-reaching proposals as that of the *Irenicum* stood little chance of being implemented, which was undoubtedly the chief reason why Stillingfleet later retreated from some of its conclusions. One of Tenison's chief arguments for the conformity of Presbyterians was therefore that "it is not probable that they shall easily procure an exchange of [episcopacy] for a newer model, by the general consent of Church and State."[55] Minor alterations in church government the Latitudinarians were willing to attempt; but their memories of the convulsive experiments of the Great Rebellion set them against major ones, particularly since, for all its problems, the Restoration Church was operating smoothly enough. "I pray from my heart for the bettering," Tenison declared, "but I dread the tinkering of government."[56]

As to the Thirty-Nine Articles, the Latitudinarians were unanimous in regarding them not as articles of faith, but as articles of agreement and peace, imposed not as things essential for salvation, but simply for the

order and tranquillity of English Christianity.* To a friend who wrote to Fowler asking what advice to give a young ordinand who had scruples about subscribing to some of the Articles, Fowler answered:

> We have the judgment of great men of our Church, that her sense of subscription to her Articles is not that thereby we should declare our belief of the truth of each, but our obliging ourselves not to contradict them. This was Archbishop Bramhall's sense, Mr. Chillingworth's and Dr. Stillingfleet in answer to Archbishop Laud's adversary quotes them as giving this sense, adding (to the best of my rememberance) his own approbation thereof.[58]

"Besides, they are not entitled Articles of *Faith* but of *Agreement*, i.e., Articles of *Peace*," Fowler continued,

> and 'tis a plain case that he who subscribes them in this sense, and accordingly is careful not to disturb the Church's peace by contradicting them, does answer the end of imposing subscription to them, for what ill influence can our thinking one way or another concerning those Articles have upon government, so long as we keep our thoughts to ourselves, and make no disturbance with them?[59]

Fowler went on to explain some of the particular Articles that had troubled the young man in question, though somewhat hampered, he wrote, because "I have been looking for the Book of Articles in my study, but could not find them." But no matter: in the sense in which he thought the Church of England imposed them, it was really not necessary to be too precise as to what they enjoined.

As to liturgy, the Latitudinarians insisted that "vesture, gesture, time and place, forms of devotion and modes of expression being but the appendages of religion," it was "therefore unbecoming wise and good men to disturb the peace of the Church about them, if they do not in all things suit with their private humors."[60] Here again they made the distinction between what was essential and what was accidental. Adoration, Stillingfleet declared, "is a substantial and proper act of divine worship: but whether that adoration is performed by prostration, or by bowing, or by kneeling, is in itself indifferent; and no man will say, that he that makes his adoration kneeling, makes another new part of worship, from what he does who performs it standing, or falling on his face."[61] As to the set prayers of the Book of Common Prayer, they were no different from any other prayers, in that their precise wording was inessential and circumstantial: "God understands the sense of our souls, the temper of our spir-

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* [In 1675, six years after being appointed Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge, Isaac Newton was unable to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles, and was prepared to leave his post. A special royal dispensation was arranged, possibly through the intervention of Isaac Barrow, so that he could continue his appointment without having to be ordained.[57]—RHP]

its, and the desires of our hearts, though no words be used for the expressing of them." Consequently, "it is the same thing to God whether a good sense and good desires be from time to time expressed by the same, or by a variety of words and phrases."[62] Nevertheless, it was unreasonable to dissent from the formularies and ceremonies of the Book of Common Prayer, for though they were indifferent to salvation, they guaranteed uniformity and unity of national worship. "It is incomparably most fit," Fowler wrote,

> that there should be a liturgy, or forms prescribed for the public worship of God, for prayer and praising of God in the Church, and for the celebration of the Holy Sacraments, with the other offices; because the public worship of God ought always to be performed with the greatest gravity and solemnity possible. But such a performance of divine worship can never be secured, where ministers are wholly left to their own liberty, and permitted to put up all the confessions, petitions, and thanksgivings of the congregation, and to perform all the offices, in their own arbitrary and extemporary expressions.[63]

Burnet argued that the Latitudinarians' point of view on church government and worship was "so rational, that I can see nothing to be excepted against it, with any show or color of reason."[64] But what the Latitudinarians' "reason" told them was indifferent was not necessarily indifferent to Nonconformists; therein, of course, lay the crux of the problem. Given their conception of reason, whereby given the same evidence, all men should come to the same conclusions, it was natural that the Latitudinarians should tend to equate stubborn or extreme Nonconformity with enthusiasm, "superstition" (emphasis upon "external and little observances, and . . . a great zeal for lesser things"),[65] or "fanaticism," which was a "blind, irrational, heady zeal."[66] Proper use of their mental faculties would bring men to conformity, unless they were hopelessly deranged, which, in fact, the Latitudinarians considered many of the sectaries to be. "It is (at least) my private conjecture," Tenison declared, "that if the revenue of the religious houses which were dissolved, had been judiciously applied to the service of men, either weak in mind, or indisposed by temper, or singular in their inclination, amongst the reformed; there might have been a diversity here (I mean such as there is in our present colleges) without a schism."[67]

The more moderate among the Nonconformists, however, particularly the Presbyterians, were merely guilty of "some great mistake in their judgments,"[68] which could, and ought to be, corrected. Such men pleaded that their consciences, after due and deliberate consideration of the requirements of uniformity, would not permit them to conform to the National Church. The Latitudinarians agreed, as Tillotson said, that no man should ever "act contrary to the persuasion and conviction of [his] conscience. For that certainly is a great sin," inasmuch as "every man's

conscience is a kind of God to him, and accuses or absolves him according to the present persuasion of it."[69] But there was such a thing as an "erroneous conscience,"[70]* and as Fowler observed, "No man is able to imagine what dismal effects superstition and enthusiasm may have upon the mind and conscience."[71] To the extent that a man's misinformed conscience was his own fault, to that extent he was responsible for the errors into which it led him. "Where our error is involuntary," Tillotson said,

> and morally invincible, God will consider it, and make allowance for it; but where it is voluntary, and occasioned by our own gross faults and neglect, we are bound to consider, and rectify our mistake: For whatever we do contrary to the law of God and our duty, in virtue of that false persuasion, we do it at our utmost peril, and must be answerable to God for it, notwithstanding we did it according to the dictate of our conscience.[72]

The Latitudinarians insisted that all Englishmen had an obligation in conscience to preserve the peace and unity of the Church of England. It was not possible, Stillingfleet argued, that "any duty should be bound upon the consciences of men, with plainer precepts, and stronger arguments than this is,"[73] for, he added, "whatever tends to the support of religion, to the preserving peace and unity among Christians, to the preventing dangerous errors and endless confusions, from the very nature of the thing, and the end of a Christian society becomes a duty."[74] Nonconformists' pleas for liberty of conscience were consequently specious and unreasonable: an "erroneous conscience" ought not to be permitted to disrupt the unity of Church and State. Besides, as Fowler said, there was a difference between "liberty of conscience" and "liberty of practice."[75] Obedience to human authority in matters indifferent was commanded by the divine law, but no power on earth could force assent to human laws, for that was an internal act which by its very nature could not be compelled. But a man's actions could legitimately be regulated in the interest of "the welfare of the community with respect to both its civil and spiritual interests."[76] So that the restrictive legislation against Nonconformists did not touch their consciences, just their external actions.

Fowler's distinction suggests that the Latitudinarians, for all their private good-will toward moderate and sober Dissenters, could justify even the harshest rigors of the Clarendon Code, as Patrick did in his *Friendly Debate between a Conformist and a Nonconformist* (1669), during a discus-

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* [At the same time, Pierre Bayle was arguing for the rights of the erring conscience and was providing for a totally tolerant theory. The Latitudinarians, for their part, were setting up a special role of conscience to preserve the peace and unity of the Church of England, and were strongly in favor of limiting errant thought and behavior, such as Saturday observance.—RHP]

sion of the Five-Mile Act (1665), which forbade Nonconformist ministers to come within five miles of any city, borough, or corporate town. Here Patrick maintained that there was no law of Christ which commanded a Nonconformist to live in a town, but that there was a divine injunction to obey the sovereign; so that anyone who disobeyed the Five-Mile Act was "not a good subject, and consequently not a good Christian; much less such a person as a minister of Christ ought to be." To the Nonconformist's objection that the Act was "tyrannical," Patrick rejoined that "if we must never submit to such things as we count harsh and rigorous, then farewell all the doctrine of Christ concerning taking up our cross, and suffering patiently."[77] Similarly, while Lloyd was on good personal terms with the Quakers of his diocese of St. Asaph, they found him a conscientious executor of the laws relating to Nonconformity. His advice to them if they wanted unrestricted freedom of worship was to go to Pennsylvania.[78]

But though the Latitudinarians agreed that the laws of the land ought to be obeyed, and that "penalties of one nature or another are necessary sanctions of laws,"[79] still they realized that "those laws that enjoin or forbid things in their own nature indifferent, ought not to be enforced with as severe penalties, as those which are made for or against things which are good or evil in themselves."[80] They generally agreed that the Clarendon Code, combined with the two Test Acts, put too heavy a burden on Nonconformists, and they were willing to see the rigor of the laws abated.[81] There were basically two ways by which this could be accomplished: either (1) by toleration, or (2) by comprehension, that is, by changing the requirements of conformity and altering the rubrics of uniformity in such ways that Dissenters could enter the communion of the National Church and so be released from the civil disabilities attaching to Nonconformity. The Latitudinarians, as we shall see, did not oppose a limited toleration, but they vastly preferred comprehension, and had grave reservations about toleration in the modern sense of the word.

In the first place, unlimited toleration was repugnant to their conception of the fundamental nature of a Christian society, wherein Church and State were coterminous. "I know not," Tenison argued, "how a National Church can be made up of separate independent churches. . . ."[82] "If several contrary parties be established by way of sufferance . . . it is difficult to imagine how all of them can be, by any coherence of the parts, united into one entire society."[83] Not only would such toleration destroy unity among Christians, it might even threaten the integrity of Christianity. As Stillingfleet put it,

> Supposing . . . every congregation to have an entire and unaccountable power within itself; what hinders but of ten congregations one may be of

> Socinians, another of Papists, another of Arians, another of Quakers, another of Anabaptists, *etc.*, and it may be no two of them of the same mind. . . . Let now any rational man judge, whether it appear probable, that so loose and scattered a government as this is, should answer the obligation among Christians, to use the best and most effectual means to preserve the faith once delivered to the saints, and to uphold peace and unity among Christians?[84]

If, however, he added, "all these several congregations [are] united under such common bonds, that the preacher is accountable to superiors; that none be admitted but such as own the true faith, and promise obedience; that public legal censure take hold upon the disturbers of the Church's peace; here we have a far more effectual means according to reason for upholding true religion among us."[85]

Accompanying their theoretical objections to toleration was the fear, as Stillingfleet put it, that "a general unlimited toleration to dissenting Protestants, will soon bring confusion among us, and in the end Popery."[86] This fear was common among Anglicans during the Restoration period, and reached a high pitch during the reign of James II, whose Declarations of Indulgence seemed but ill-camouflaged attempts to advance the Roman cause. It was a commonplace of the time that Papists, particularly the Jesuits, made use of dissension among Protestants in order to disestablish the Church of England, and so to clear the way for the re-establishment of the Church of Rome. To this end, they employed sectaries as instruments of confusion. Fowler, for example, firmly believed that members of the Society of Jesus, using the Independents as their unknowing tools, somehow had accomplished the Great Rebellion and the execution of Charles I.[87] The Quakers were especially suspect of being either crypto-Catholics, or else of being manipulated by seditious Papists. "Who knows," Tenison inquired,

> whether they have not a reserve for the Romish religion, against a favorable opportunity, though sometimes they speak of Rome as Babylon? . . . [They] speak in general of their 'light'; [but] in such doubtful manner, that inquisitive men cannot yet understand from what quarter of the heavens it shines. The men of design amongst them may embrace any religion, and the melancholy will make a tolerable order amongst the Romans.[88]

Such misgivings about the Quakers explain the otherwise odd correspondence in 1686 between Tillotson and William Penn, in which Penn undertook to vindicate himself from Tillotson's suspicion that his friendship with James II might signify that he was "a Papist, I think a Jesuit" in disguise.[89] The Latitudinarians never gave up their hatred of Popery, but the Revolution Settlement abated somewhat the almost paranoid quality of their fear of it. Without friends on the throne, Papists, whether by manipulating the sectaries or not, were less likely to do harm to Church and

State. As Fowler contentedly observed in 1707, the Church "never appeared to be in so little danger from the Papists, since the reign of King Charles the Martyr, as in the reigns of King William of glorious memory, and our most gracious Queen Anne."[90] Consequently, this aspect of the Latitudinarians' distrust of toleration had substantially been removed.

Not only would unlimited toleration give Roman Catholicism an opportunity to establish itself as the state Church, it would provide a similar opportunity to other Nonconforming groups. Many of the Dissenters, particularly the Presbyterians, agreed with the Anglicans in the notion of the necessity of a National Church. With them, as Stillingfleet said, "the true controversy is not about the reasonableness of uniformity, but who shall have the power of prescribing the rules of it."[91] And as Fowler observed, "there is hardly any one party of the Dissenters that would be half so favorable to the rest, should they get into power, as our constitution is to all of them."[92] Was it therefore "not now a very hard case," Stillingfleet asked, "that the Church of England must be loaded with bitter reproaches, and exposed to the common hatred of all parties for the sake of that, which every one of them would practice if it were in their power, and think it very justifiable to do so?"[93] What the Church of England enjoined in the way of uniformity, the Latitudinarians said, it enjoined as indifferent to salvation. What most of the Dissenters would enjoin if they had the opportunity, they would enjoin as necessary to salvation. Not only would that be tyranny, but as Stillingfleet observed, one of the few grounds for legitimately separating oneself from a National Church was its imposing extraessentials as essentials,[94] so that a displacement of Anglicanism by one of the Dissenting parties would probably bring chaos to English Christendom. "I shall only say, that so much toleration," therefore, "as may consist with the interests of religion, and public safety, may be granted," Glanvill said in 1669. "And were the duty of catholic charity duly practiced, and private Christians once persuaded to tolerate one another," he continued, "it might then perhaps be safer for the government to give a larger public toleration than possibly now is fit."[95]

It might seem that comprehension would be easy on the terms by which the Latitudinarians interpreted the requirements of uniformity. But the Act of Uniformity of 1662 did specifically require "assent and consent" to the formularies and usages of the Book of Common Prayer. Dissenters might be pardoned for thinking that it was a piece of casuistry for the Latitudinarians to say that the Act required assent and consent 'in the sense in which the Church intended them,' that is, assent simply to the general principle of conformity. In any event, the reason why men dissented from the Church was precisely because they did not consider its usages indifferent to salvation. Consequently, if comprehension was

to be achieved, some accommodation would have to be made for their scruples. To achieve such an accommodation was a task in which the Latitudinarians labored longer and more consistently that any other contemporary group in the Church. The three chief attempts at comprehension after the Restoration Settlement were in 1668, 1675, and 1689; in all three, Latitudinarians played decisive roles.

The crucial question, of course, was, Who should be comprehended, and by what concessions? Simply to ask the question was to exclude those who did not want to enter the National Church on any terms, as well as those whom the Church would lose its identity by comprehending. Roman Catholics were beyond the pale. As to Protestants, Tenison, even in his *Argument for Union*, showed that he realized that union could not be complete or universal. "Arians, Socinians, Anabaptists, Fifth-Monarchy Men, Sensual Millenaries, Behemists, Familists, Seekers, Antinomians, Ranters, Sabbatarians, Quakers, Muggletonians, (and) Sweet-Singers," he wrote, "may associate in a caravan, but cannot join in the communion of a Church."[96] Some of them would not want to: those who were "bretheren of the congregational way," like the Anabaptists and the Quakers, disapproved in principle of the very notion of a National Church. And so, in effect, comprehension related almost entirely to Presbyterians. The differences between Anglicans and Presbyterians were many: the most important negotiable ones boiled down to the question of the validity of Presbyterians orders; such ceremonies enjoined by the Book of Common Prayer as kneeling for communion and the sign of the cross at baptism; the composition of certain offices and the wording of certain prayers. Negotiation about episcopacy was out of the question, because neither Crown, Parliament, nor Convocation would have been prepared to make any concessions on that point. We shall never know, in fact, how far the Latitudinarians would have been willing to go in their concessions to Presbyterians, because they always negotiated with an eye to what was possible of implementation, rather than what they might themselves privately have been willing to concede.

The first attempt at comprehension in 1668 was a direct result of the fall of Clarendon in 1667. The Cabal were a motley group, but they agreed in a moderate and liberal religious policy. The chief agents behind the attempt were Sir Orlando Bridgeman, who succeeded Clarendon as Lord Keeper, the Duke of Buckingham, and Sir Matthew Hale, Chancellor of the Exchequer. The clergymen involved were Bridgeman's chaplain, Hezekiah Burton,[97] Wilkins, Stillingfleet, and Tillotson. Wilkins was primarily responsible for drawing up the terms to be offered. He and Burton presented them to Richard Baxter, William Bates, and Thomas Manton, three of the most distinguished London

Nonconformists. Wilkins's plan was a combination of comprehension and limited toleration.[98] The means to comprehension were four. First, clergymen ordained by Presbyteries were to receive episcopal reordination, but in terms which suggested not so much that their first orders were invalid as that they now received official sanction from the legally-established Church to minister to a congregation. Second, the oath for ministers and schoolteachers prescribed by the Act of Uniformity was changed: it now consisted of a general profession of approval of "the doctrines, worship, and government established in the Church of England as containing all things necessary to salvation," and a declaration that "I will not endeavor . . . to bring in any doctrine contrary to that which is established; and . . . I will continue in the communion of the Church of England, and will not do anything to disturb the peace thereof." This change thus required only outward conformity, not necessarily inward assent. Third, "the gesture of kneeling at the sacrament, and the use of the cross in baptism, and bowing at the name of Jesus, may be left indifferent, or may be taken away, as shall be thought most expedient." Fourth, Wilkins recommended a number of changes in the Prayer Book and canons for the further satisfaction of Dissenters. For those Protestants to whom comprehension could not apply, Wilkins suggested the following terms of indulgence: (1) freedom of public worship, whether in or near towns, provided that each member of the congregation declare and register himself; (2) these Dissenters were to be incapable of public office; but (3) they were to be released from the strictures of all the penal laws, though they must continue to pay "all public duties to the parish where they inhabit." This indulgence was to be in effect for three years. Baxter and Bates wanted to expand the terms of comprehension; Wilkins, however, though expressing "himself willing of more," declared "that more would not pass with the Parliament, and so would frustrate all our attempts."[99] A bill containing these proposals was drawn up by Sir Matthew Hale, but it was never introduced into Parliament. Wilkins had unfortunately disclosed his plan to Seth Ward, Bishop of Salisbury, hoping to win his support; Ward had revealed it to other members of the episcopal bench, and together they succeeded in nipping it in the bud.

The comprehension plan of 1675 was also frustrated. Baxter, having been informed that some members of the House of Lords would be favorable to a scheme of union, was persuaded to undertake informal conferences to that end with Stillingfleet and Tillotson. Baxter was suspicious and sceptical, for one of the bishops who now seemed in favor of comprehension was Seth Ward, who had been the chief instrument in defeating the attempt of 1668. But as Baxter said, Stillingfleet and Tillot-

son were "men of so much learning, honesty, and interest, that I took it as our duty, to accept the offer, and to try with them, how far we could agree."[100] Proposals and counter-proposals changed hands, but the conferences finally broke down for reasons given by Tillotson in a letter to Baxter. "I do most heartily desire an accommodation," he wrote, "and shall always endeavor it. But I am sure it will be a prejudice to me, and signify nothing to the effecting of the thing, which as circumstances are cannot pass in either House, without the concurrence of a considerable part of the bishops, and the countenance of his Majesty; which at present I see little reason to expect."[101]

By 1688, the political atmosphere had changed. James II's actions had convinced even powerful elements of the High Church party that comprehension was desirable in order to present a united Protestant front to his Catholic policy, and before the Revolution some of them had initiated plans which were to culminate in the great attempt of William III's Ecclesiastical Commission of 1689.[102] William wanted both comprehension and toleration, but regarded comprehension as more important, because it would afford full civil liberties to Dissenters who could be accommodated, and so make them capable of civil employment. At his instigation, the Bill for Toleration and a Bill for Comprehension, drawn up by the Earl of Nottingham and containing in substance Wilkins's proposals of 1668, were introduced into Parliament. Parliament enacted the Toleration Bill, but the House of Commons rejected the Comprehension Bill, asking William to summon Convocation to consider it. Tillotson feared that unchannelled discussion in Convocation would raise more problems than it would solve, and on his advice William constituted a Commission of divines authorized "to prepare such alterations and amendments of the liturgy and canons, and such proposals for the reformation of the ecclesiastical courts, and to consider such other matters as in your judgment may most conduce to . . . the good order, edification, and unity of the Church of England."[103] These proposals would then be tendered to Convocation. The membership of the Commission gave representation to different points of view, but naturally enough, it was comprised in a great part of those who would favor a liberal scheme of comprehension. Among its members therefore were Lloyd, Burnet, Stillingfleet, Patrick, Tenison, and Fowler. Other Latitudinarians were Robert Grove, Richard Kidder, John Williams, and Nicholas Stratford. The recommendations of the Commission, reached after lengthy and sometimes acrimonious sessions, made a number of substantial concessions to Presbyterian prejudices. But when Convocation convened in November 1689, it soon became more than apparent that these proposals had no chance of success. The Latitudinarians, particularly Fowler and Tenison, did yeoman work

on their behalf, but too many were set against them, particularly in the predominantly High Church lower House. When Parliament was dissolved in early 1690, Convocation was automatically dissolved as well, and the proposals of the Commission were not revived again until 1854, when Parliament ordered them published in preparation for a scheme to revise the Book of Common Prayer.

Thus comprehension as a solution to the problem of Dissent was dead. Of the two seventeenth-century alternatives by which ease could be given to tender consciences, toleration had effectively won the day. As heirs of the political heritage begun with the Toleration Act, it is easy for us to see that it was probably the best solution; and with hindsight, we are perhaps justified in questioning whether comprehension could ever, in any event, have been accomplished successfully. But the Latitudinarians thought that the political and religious needs of their day were best answered by comprehension, and that remained the ideal. Toleration they realized was a practical necessity, and they welcomed it as such. Since its terms excluded non-Trinitarian heretics and Catholic idolators, since the Crown was safely in Protestant hands, and since the Test Acts were still in force, the main practical objections which they had advanced against unlimited toleration did not apply. But Toleration was still *faute de mieux*. "The case of separation," Stillingfleet declared in 1690, "stands just as it did in point of conscience, which is not now one jot more reasonable or just than it was before."[104]

In their practical political acumen; in their continuous involvement in practical measures for the accommodation of Dissenters; in their spirit of compromise and their well-developed institutional sense, the Latitudinarians exhibited a closer affinity with Falkland's circle than with the Cambridge Platonists. The Cambridge Platonists were apparently much influenced by Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, but in a way different from Falkland's group and the Latitudinarians.[105] For the Cambridge Platonists, Hooker seems to have had primarily a personal message, justifying their individual submission to the main dispositions of any Church in adiaphora. For Falkland's group and the Latitudinarians, Hooker suggested a missionary enterprise for the Church of England. The Cambridge Platonists' pleas for toleration fall sweetly on modern ears, but given the religious and political situation of seventeenth-century England, they were often impractical counsels of perfection. Falkland's circle would have agreed with Whichcote that "There should be difference of judgment, if we keep charity; but it is most unmanly to quarrel because we differ."[106] But they would, with the Latitudinarians, have added that charity may most efficiently be preserved by conformity to the specific institutional framework of the National Church. The Cambridge Platon-

ists preached Christian unity, but had such an exiguous institutional sense and such lack of interest in politics that they offered few practical suggestions as to how it might be achieved. Falkland, Hales, Chillingworth, and Hammond all had a vision of a broad and comprehensive Church which could implement their irenic views. Though Falkland, for example, was finally driven by the force of events to vote against episcopacy in the Long Parliament, he had previously defended it there, not as *jure divino*, but as not being *"injuria humana."*[107] We have seen the nature of Chillingworth's interpretation and defense of episcopacy, and Hammond carried it forth in his writings at large, but particularly in his *Vindication of the Dissertations concerning Episcopacy* (1654) and in his *Answer to the Animadversions of the Dissertations touching Ignatius's Epistles* (1654). That Chillingworth, Hales, and Hammond were so often quoted by the Latitudinarians in disquisitions on church government shows that while they learned charity from both groups, from Great Tew they learned both charity and the nature of the rubrics whereby charity could be institutionalized. So that here, as in speculative theology, the Latitudinarians were more in the spirit and tradition of Great Tew than in those of Cambridge Platonism. In the eighteenth century, of course, the intimations of Erastianism obvious in the Latitudinarians' ecclesiology became more apparent. This was the result of the convergence of many factors, chief among them the Nonjuring schism, which removed from the Church the element most conscious of the unique power of the keys, the eclipse of Convocation, and the alliance between Whiggism and Latitudinarianism. But that is another story.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CONCLUSION

This essay began with Burnet's declaration that the Latitudinarians were the most active and acute defenders of the Church of England in the latter part of the seventeenth century, and that Christianity and Anglicanism would have been much the worse without them. Any evaluation of such an assertion must be chiefly a matter of personal opinion. I am inclined to think that Burnet was, on the whole, correct in the short run, but not necessarily so in the long run. It is true that as a group the Latitudinarians were the most vigilant opponents of the intellectual foes of Anglicanism, whether Hobbism, Deism, scepticism, or of the Roman Catholic *machine de guerre*. But we have seen how their system of speculative theology could contribute to the unbelief and the various heterodoxies of the eighteenth century. They were extremely active in combatting "practical atheism," but their moral theology was a prelude to the prudential morality characteristic of the European Enlightenment. Like the *virtuosi*, they tried more than any other clerical group to defend religion by allying it with science, but the nature of the alliance tended to remove supernatural and superphysical elements in Christianity, and so ultimately contributed to the conflict between science and religion in the eighteenth century. More than any other group of Anglican divines, they sought means to ease the tender consciences of Dissenters. But while this served to give notice to Dissenters that there was some measure of balm in Gilead, it was toleration, not comprehension, that won the day. And it is the judgment of dispassionate Anglican scholars that had the Prayer Book revisions of 1689, which came chiefly from the pens of the Latitudinarians, been adopted, the integrity and beauty of Anglican worship would have suffered a grievous loss.[1] If it be said that during the Restoration and Revolutionary periods there were no more stalwart defenders of the Church of England as by law established, it must be added that the Latitudinarians' ecclesiology ultimately contributed heavily to the Erastian quality of the eighteenth-century Church. To the service of religion they brought a new and effective prose style, of which they were the chief contemporary clerical proponents. But it can be considered to have been a mixed blessing, for it was a language which spoke to the mind and not the heart, and so could not easily convey the mystery and poetry inherent in Christianity. No one can deny that the Latitudinarians were the most vigorous opponents of the Catholic menace during the Restora-

tion period, but it might be inquired whether or not they exaggerated the nature of that menace, and whether or not some of their energies might better have been directed elsewhere. If, as Macaulay asserted, the Revolution Settlement contained the seeds of all subsequent developments in the realm of personal liberties, one can only be grateful for the decisive role the Latitudinarians played in shaping and establishing it. But it is well to remember that throughout the eighteenth century, Nonjurors and Jacobites found cause to castigate them as traitors to King and Church. As to the Latitudinarians themselves, there can be no question of their devotion to their duties as they saw them. And they would have said that their chief responsibility was not to history, but to God, and to the success of what Wilkins, scientist to the end, described as "the Great Experiment" upon which he was then embarking.[2]

NOTES

PART ONE

1. John Evelyn, *Diary*, 29 May 1660.
2. *Book of Common Prayer*, Order of Service for 29 May (removed by Act of Parliament in 1857).

CHAPTER ONE

1. Gilbert Burnet, *A History of My Own Time, with Notes by the Earls of Dartmouth and Hardwicke, Speaker Onslow, and Dean Swift*, ed. M. J. Routh (2nd ed., 6 vols., Oxford, 1833), I, 339. Hereafter cited as *HOT*. [A new edition is being prepared from two manuscript copies in the British Library which include some material not contained in the earlier printed versions.—RHP]
2. Robert Grove, *A Vindication of the Conforming Clergy from the Unjust Aspersions of Heresie, &c. in answer to some part of M. Jenkyn's Funeral Sermon upon Dr. Seaman, With short Reflections On some Passages in a Sermon Preached by Mr. J. S. . . . In a Letter to a Friend* (London, 1676), p. 24.
3. *Ibid.*
4. S. P., *A Brief Account of the new Sect of Latitude-Men: Together with some Reflections upon the New Philosophy* (London, 1662), pp. 4–5. [See the recent article on Patrick by Jan van den Berg, "Between Platonism and Enlightenment: Simon Patrick (1625–1707) and His Place in the Latitudinarian Movement," *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis*, LVIII (1988), 164–79.—RHP]
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 3–4.
6. Edward Fowler, *The Principles and Practices, Of certain Moderate Divines of the Church of England, Abusively called Latitudinarians (Greatly mis-understood) Truly Represented and Defended . . . in A Free Discourse between two Intimate Friends* (2nd ed., London, 1671), pp. 9–10. This book, first published anonymously in 1670, is usually called the *Free Discourse*.
7. S. P., *A Brief Account*, p. 5.
8. *HOT*, I, 342.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 346–47.
10. Marjorie Hope Nicolson, in "Christ's College and the Latitude-Men," *Modern Philology*, XXVII (1929–30), pp. 35–53, points out that the first opposition to the Cambridge Platonists as "Latitudinarians" rose as a result not only of their theological and philosophical principles, but also because of a personal rivalry within Christ's College, Cambridge, their stronghold at the time of the Restoration. Ralph Cudworth, Master of Christ's since 1654, had aroused the enmity of a party led by one Ralph Widdrington, a Fellow of the College who had a conservative Calvinist's suspicion of religious innovation, and whose ambition to replace Cudworth as Master had been thwarted just before 1660. After the Restoration, Cudworth and the other Fellows expelled him from the College for "contumacy and neglect of statutes" (p. 44). Widdrington regained his place in 1662, and continued to do all he could to discredit Cudworth and to have him removed from the headship. Unsuccessful in his various attempts to

unseat Cudworth with charges of peculation and laxity in administration, Widdrington had early expanded his attack on the Master to include his religious beliefs, and the beliefs also of his fellow Cambridge Platonists, particularly those in Christ's. Widdrington wrote, in some frustration, that in answer to the accusations levelled against him, Cudworth would put forth "the dear old plea for liberty of conscience, and for allowing every conceited fellow to follow the light within, and to do anything upon a principle as acceptable as this is to men who desire a greater latitude to walk in than our statutes will permit" (p. 46). In 1665, he actually petitioned the Archbishop against the College as a "seminary of heretics" (p. 51). Such a combination of motives, personal and theological, for opposition to the "Latitudinarians" is suggested by a letter from Cudworth's friend Henry More, then a Fellow of Christ's, to the Viscountess Conway on 31 December 1663:

> R. W. with his confederates has of late assaulted the College and brought in the Visitor, to out Mr. Standish as pretending him the supernumerary . . . but he being fortified by the King's letters their whole project was disappointed for that bout. But the peevishness of some men is indefatigable, and I suspect there is some very [peremptory?] plot against Dr. Cudworth himself, if not against all his friends. I am loath to speak out what I think is at the bottom of it. But there are some have a very aching tooth against such as they would brand with the nickname of latitude-men. What they mean by that word I know not, but I am confident they apply it to such persons, as it were the interest both of the King and Church if they were multiplied into hundreds of thousands. I am railed at and blustered against for a heretic, and doubt not but there are that eagerly desire I were so, though they feign such great zeal against heresy (pp. 47–48).

11. David Lloyd, *Wonders no Miracles: or, Mr. Valentine Greatrakes Gift of Healing Examined . . . in a letter to a Reverend Divine* (London, 1666), p. 12. Valentine Greatrakes (1629–83), "the stroker," enjoyed contemporary controversial fame for his successes (and failures) in curing scrofula, ague, and other minor ills by the laying on of hands. Apparently the chief reason for his being branded a Latitudinarian was a fairly casual friendship with Cudworth, More, and Wilkins, though Whichcote was one of his patients. Here is a good example of how carelessly the word was used. [Greatrakes also treated Lady Anne Conway, and was brought into the circle of her friends.—RHP]

12. Grove, *A Vindication of the Conforming Clergy*, p. 61. Grove quotes the charge from a sermon recently preached before Charles II by one J. S., whom I have not been able to identify.

13. Samuel Butler, *Remains* (2 vols., London, 1759), II, 177.

14. Thomas Comber, *A Companion to the Temple: or, A Help to Devotion, In the Daily Use of the Common Prayer* (3rd ed., 2 vols., London, 1679), I, 363.

15. John Goodman, *The Old Religion Demonstrated in its Principles, And described in the Life and Practice thereof* (London, 1684), pp. 60–61.

16. Lambeth Palace MSS. 941, fol. 101. An abstract, not in the King's hand.

17. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, pp. 8–9. Compare Grove, *A Vindication of the Conforming Clergy*, p. 24: "It has been generally fabled, that they are men that can stretch their consciences any way, and that are ready to comply with whatsoever is uppermost." John Bunyan asserted that he had heard a "ranting Latitudinarian" say, "If the devil should preach, I would hear him, before I would suffer persecution." *A Defense of the Doctrine of Justification by Faith in Jesus Christ* (1672), in G. Offor, ed., *The Works of John Bunyan* (4 vols., Glasgow, 1855), II, 323.

18. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, p. 10.

19. G. R. Noyes, ed., *The Poetical Works of John Dryden* (Cambridge, Mass., 1909), p. 237 (lines 1438–55).

20. *Ibid.*, lines 1456–61.

21. *A New Dictionary of the Terms Ancient and Modern of the Canting Crew, In its several Tribes, of Gypsies, Beggars, Thieves, Cheats, &c. . . . by B. E. Gent.*, (London, 1699). The earliest listing of "Latitudinarian" in a dictionary is in Cole's *English Dictionary* (London, 1685), where the word is defined as referring to "the moderate divines of the Church of England, abusively so-called." The definition was obviously taken from the title of Fowler's *Free Discourse.*

22. British Museum Add. MSS. 23,216, fol. 275; quoted in Nicolson, "Christ's College and the Latitude-Men," p. 51.

23. S. P., *A Brief Account*, p. 4.

24. Burnet, *HOT*, I, 342.

25. Gilbert Burnet, *A Modest and Free Conference Betwixt a Conformist and a Non-conformist, about the present distempers of Scotland. In Six Dialogues, By a Lover of Peace* (Glasgow or Edinburgh, 1669), p. 84.

26. Grove, *A Vindication of the Conforming Clergy*, p. 60; a quotation from the sermon by "J. S."

27. Quoted in Alexander Taylor, ed., *The Works of Symon Patrick, D.D.* (9 vols., Oxford, 1858), I, Preface, xxxii, n.

28. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, p. 93.

29. Grove, *A Vindication of the Conforming Clergy*, p. 59; another quotation from "J.S."

30. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, p. 86.

31. Grove, *A Vindication of the Conforming Clergy*, p. 59; another quotation from "J.S."

32. Burnet, *A Modest and Free Conference*, p. 85.

33. Offor, *The Works of John Bunyan*, II, 332. Bunyan told his readers that Fowler was "a glorious Latitudinarian, that can, as to religion, turn and twist like an eel on an angle; or rather like the weather-cock that stands on the steeple." II, 332.

34. William Jenkyn, *Exodus: Or, The Decease of Holy Men and Ministers. . . . A Sermon Preach't . . . By occasion of the much lamented Death of . . . Dr. Lazarus Seaman* (London, 1675), p. 56.

35. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, pp. 38–39.

36. James Duport, *Musae Subsecivae seu Poetica Stromata* (Cambridge, 1676), p. 58. "It is long and wide, this word which I scarcely understand: but still, it is rather helpful so to dub these new voices. For whoever asserts more than we do, it is said to be rigidly narrow; we are pleased only by those of our own persuasion. But why do we judge everybody's understanding of things by our own standards? Is he alone wise who thinks like me? Or am I a Procustes, who stretches and lops off, making all dogmas conform to my measurements? Such are odious, indeed, such arrogant caprices, to blacken with censure the ideas of another, and when someone explains divine revelation differently from us to call him a 'Stoic' or perchance a 'Pelagian'." My translation.

37. Samuel Pepys, *Diary*, 16 March 1669.

38. Quoted in George Mason, *A Supplement to Johnson's Dictionary* (New York, 1803). I have not been able to find the original reference.

39. William Wycherley, *The Plain Dealer* (first performed in 1674), I, i. [Though an early edition of the *Cambridge History of English Literature* (1912) presumes that

the play was first acted in 1674 and published three years later in 1677, more recent scholarship assigns for its performance a date only a few months earlier than its publication date, i.e., 1676/77. See James Sutherland, *English Literature of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1969).—RHP]

40. E. Phillips, *The New World of English Words* (5th ed., London, 1696).

41. R. H. Sheperd, ed., *The Prose Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (2 vols., London, 1888), I, 273.

42. D. Fenning, *The Royal English Dictionary* (2nd ed., London, 1763).

43. See J. W. C. Wand, *Anglicanism in History and Today* (New York and Toronto, 1962), p. 106.

44. John Tulloch, *Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century*, (2 vols., Edinburgh and London, 1872), II, 439–40.

45. [For a recent collection of essays reflecting these interests, see Sarah Hutton, ed., *Henry More (1614–1687): Tercentary Studies* (Dordrecht, 1990). The volume also contains several annotated bibliographies compiled by Robert Crocker, including one of modern studies on More and his circle.—RHP]

46. J. B. Mullinger, *The University of Cambridge from the Election of Buckingham to the Chancellorship in 1626 to the Decline of the Platonist Movement* (Cambridge, 1911), p. 664.

47. G. R. Cragg, *From Puritanism to the Age of Reason: A Study of Changes in Religious Thought within the Church of England, 1660 to 1700* (Cambridge, 1950), pp. 62–63.

48. As for example in M. Kauffman, "Latitudinarianism and Pietism," *The Cambridge Modern History* (13 vols., Cambridge, 1934), V, 742–63.

49. As for example in W. K. Jordan, *The Development of Religious Toleration in England* (4 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1932–40), II, 347 *et seq.* Joseph Lecler, *Toleration and Reformation* (2 vols., London and New York, 1960), II, 427 *et seq.* does the same. But frequently Falkland's group are more properly called "Latitudinarians" with the initial in lower case, as in Thomas Lyon, *The Theory of Religious Liberty in England, 1603–39* (Cambridge, 1937), p. 143 *et seq.* [The most important recent study of the Great Tew circle has appeared in the collection by Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans: Seventeenth Century Essays* (London, 1987), pp. 166–230.—RHP]

CHAPTER TWO

1. William Lloyd, *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of the Right Reverend Father in God John, Late Lord Bishop of Chester* (London, 1672), pp. 32–33.

2. John Aubrey, *Brief Lives, chiefly of Contemporaries set down between 1669 and 1695*, edited by A. Clark (2 vols., Oxford, 1898), II, 299.

3. [For a full-length study of Wilkins, see Barbara J. Shapiro, *John Wilkins, 1614–1672: An Intellectual Biography* (Berkeley, 1969). Wilkins's role in the development of science in England is examined in Charles Webster, *The Great Instauration: Science, Medicine and Reform, 1626–1660* (London, 1975).—RHP]

4. John Beardmore, *Some Memorials of the Most Reverend Dr. John Tillotson, late Lord Archbishop of Canterbury*, in Thomas Birch, *The Life of the Most Reverend Dr. John Tillotson, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury* (2nd ed., London, 1753), Appendix I (pp. 381–415), p. 384.

5. Gilbert Burnet, *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of the Most Reverend Father in God John, by the Divine Providence, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury* (London, 1694), p. 10.

6. John Tillotson, *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of the Reverend Benjamin Whichcot, D.D.* (24 May 1683), in *The Works of the Most Reverend Dr. John Tillotson, Late Lord Archbishop of Canterbury* (3 vols., London, 1712–14), III, 278.

7. Beardmore, *Memorials*, in Birch, *Life of Tillotson*, p. 387.

8. Burnet, *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of the . . . Lord Archbishop of Canterbury*, p. 12.

9. [Wilkins's theory of language is receiving new consideration through recent scholarly interest in historical linguistics. See, for example, Hans Aarsleff, *From Locke to Saussure: Essays on the Study of Language and Intellectual History* (Minneapolis, 1982); Vivian Salmon, *The Study of Language in Seventeenth-Century England* (Amsterdam, 1979); M. M. Slaughter, *Universal Languages and Scientific Taxonomy in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1982); Sidonie Clauss, "John Wilkins' Essay toward a Real Character: Its Place in the Seventeenth-Century Episteme," *JHI*, XLIII (1982), 531–54.—RHP]

10. Burnet, *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of the . . . Lord Archbishop of Canterbury*, p. 12.

11. Birch, *Life of Tillotson*, p. 29.

12. [A modern selection of Tillotson's sermons has been published by Irène Simon, together with a brief introduction to his life and an analysis of his sermon style, in her collection *Three Restoration Divines, Barrow, South, Tillotson: Selected Sermons*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1967). For an analysis of Tillotson's theological doctrine, see John Marshall, "The Ecclesiology of the Latitude Men 1660–1689: Stillingfleet, Tillotson and 'Hobbism'," *JEH*, XXXVI (1985), 407–27.—RHP]

13. Anon., *Some Select Queries Humbly Offered to the Consideration of the D- - - of C- -t- -b- -y*, n.d.

14. Anon., *A Letter out of Suffolk to a Friend in London, Giving Some Account of the Last Sickness and Death of Dr. William Sancroft, Late Lord Archbishop of Canterbury* (London, 1694), p. 13.

15. Anon., *Happy be Lucky: or, A Catalogue of Books to be Sold by Lottery* (in *Pamphlets from the Year 1694 to 1696*, Lambeth Palace Library).

16. *Ibid.*

17. Lloyd, *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of the . . . Late Lord Bishop of Chester*, pp. 25–26.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

19. *Reliquiae Baxterianae: or Mr. Richard Baxter's Narrative of the most Memorable Passages of his Life and Times* (London, 1696), p. 386. Compare Beardmore (*Memorials*, in Birch, *Life of Tillotson*, p. 390) on Tillotson, who "was looked upon as the head of the Latitudinarians . . . i.e., persons, that had not great liking for the liturgy or ceremonies, or indeed the government of the Church, but yet had attained to such a largeness and freedom of judgment, so that they could conform, tho' without any warmth or affection for these things."

20. Anthony à Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses and Fasti*, ed. Philip Bliss (4 vols., London, 1813–20), III, 1244.

21. Glanvill, *A Further Discovery of Mr. Henry Stubbe* (London, 1671), p. 7, quoted in Jackson I. Cope, *Joseph Glanvill, Anglican Apologist* (St. Louis, 1956), p. 5.

22. [Richard H. Popkin has written an introduction to Glanvill's thought in the reprint edition of Glanvill's *Essays on Several Important Subjects in Philosophy*

and Religion, (New York, 1970), pp. v–xxxv. For an analysis of Glanvill's scepticism, integrating his scientific interest with his philosophic defense of witchcraft in *Sadducimus Triumphatus*, see Sascha Talmor, *Glanvill: The Uses and Abuses of Scepticism* (London, 1981). For briefer studies, see Richard H. Popkin, "Joseph Glanvill's Continuation of the New Atlantis: Mitigated Scepticism and the Ideal of the Royal Society," *Actes, XIIe Congrês International d'Histoire des Sciences* (Paris, 1968), pp. 84–94; Thomas H. Jobe, "The Devil in Restoration Science: The Glanvill–Webster Witchcraft Debate," *Isis*, LXXII (1981), 343–56; and R. M. Burns, *The Great Debate on Miracles: From Joseph Glanvill to David Hume* (Lewisburg, 1981).—RHP]

23. Burnet, *HOT*, I, 344.

24. Lloyd, *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of the . . . Late Lord Bishop of Chester*, p. 26.

25. Burnet, *HOT*, I, 345.

26. [See Anthony T. Grafton, "Joseph Scaliger and Historical Chronology: The Rise and Fall of a Discipline," *History and Theory*, XIV (1975), 156–85, and *Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship* (New York, 1983); and "From *De die natali* to *De emandatione temporum:* The Origins and Settings of Scaliger's Chronology," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute*, XLVIII (1985), 100–43. See also Paolo Rossi, *The Dark Abyss of Time: The History of the Earth and the History of Nations from Hooke to Vico* (Chicago, 1984).—RHP]

27. [For a contemporary discussion, see Richard H. Popkin, "The Third Force in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy: Scepticism, Science, and Biblical Prophecy," *Nouvelles de la republique des lettres*, III (1983), 35–63.—RHP]

28. Edward Stillingfleet, *Origines Sacrae, or a Rational Account of the Grounds of Christian Faith, as to the Truth and Divine Authority of the Scriptures* (London, 1662), Preface to the Reader.

29. *The Autobiography of Simon Patrick, Works*, IX, 418–19.

30. During this year Patrick wrote a series of letters, containing information about the plague, to his friend Mrs. Elizabeth Gauden, at Hutton Hall, near Burntwood, Essex, copies of which are in the British Museum (add. MSS. 5810). They are printed in his *Works*, IX, 571–617. It is interesting that they survived, since Patrick suggested that she burn them, for fear of infection.

31. [For an exposition of Patrick's life and thought, see Jan van den Berg's article, "Simon Patrick and His Place in the Latitudinarian Movement," pp. 164–79.—RHP]

32. Evelyn, *Diary*, 21 March 1683.

33. Burnet, *HOT*, I, 346.

34. T. E. S. Clarke and H. C. Foxcroft, *A Life of Gilbert Burnet* (Cambridge, 1907), p. 329.

35. W. H. Hutton, in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, XVIII, 1265.

36. [Since this study, there has been one intellectual biography examining Stillingfleet's ideas by Robert T. Carroll, *The Common-Sense Philosophy of Religion of Bishop Edward Stillingfleet: 1635–99* (The Hague, 1975), and one briefer study of his thought by Richard H. Popkin, "The Philosophy of Bishop Stillingfleet," *JHP*, IX (1971), 303–19.—RHP]

37. *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, p. 388.

38. Pepys, *Diary*, 23 April 1665.

39. *Ibid.* Pepys stated that such was the opinion of Archbishop Sheldon and the Bishop of London, Humphrey Henchman.

40. H. C. Foxcroft, ed. *A Supplement to Burnet's History of My Own Time* (Oxford, 1902), p. 460.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 463.

42. *Ibid.*, pp 45–46.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 463.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 467.

45. Henry Hallam, in fact, considered anti-Romanism to be the prominent characteristic of Latitudinarianism. See his *Constitutional History of England from the Accession of Henry VII to the Death of George II* (3 vols., Paris, 1841), III, 43.

46. Tenison, *An Argument for Union, Taken from the True Interest of those Dissenters in England, who Profess, and call themselves Protestants* (London, 1683), p. 19.

47. Patrick's account of this episode may be found in his *Autobiography, Works*, IX, 509–12.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 513.

49. See A. Tindal Hart, *William Lloyd, Bishop, Politician, Author and Prophet* (London, 1952), p. 104.

50. Patrick, *Autobiography, Works*, IX, 518–19. 31 January 1689 was declared a day of public thanksgiving for England's deliverance. Patrick preached at St. Paul's Covent Garden; Tillotson at Lincoln's Inn; and Burnet before the House of Commons. Of the sermons preached that day, only these three were published.

51. *The Judgment and Decree of the University of Oxford, passed in their Convocation, July 31, 1683, Against Certain pernicious books and Damnable Doctrines, Destructive to the Sacred Persons of Princes* (Oxford, 1683), p. 8; quoted in Cragg, *From Puritanism to the Age of Reason*, p. 165.

52. Burnet and Tillotson attended Lord William Russell in 1683 after he was sentenced to death for implication in the Rye House Plot. Believing him innocent, and hoping to procure leniency for him, they attempted unsuccessfully to persuade him to declare that resistance to authority was forbidden by human and divine law. Tillotson sent him a letter, later published without his consent, categorically asserting that it was against the Protestant religion to take up arms against a prince under any pretext whatsoever. See Birch, *Life of Tillotson*, pp. 102–15, and Burnet, *HOT*, II, 375–91. Similarly, Stillingfleet declared that not only were passive obedience and non-resistance characteristic Anglican teachings; "but which is far more effectual [they are] the doctrines of Christ and his Apostles and of the primitive Church." *Vindication of the Answer to Some Late Papers concerning the Unity and Authority of the Catholic Church, and the Reformation of the Church of England*, in *The Works of that Eminent and most Learned Prelate, Dr. Edw. Stillingfleet, Late Lord Bishop of Worcester* (6 vols., London, 1710), VI, 732. (Hereafter cited as Stillingfleet, *Works*.) When the outraged James II told the Seven Bishops that their Petition had raised the standard of rebellion, Lloyd told him that they would rather "lose the last drop of our blood rather than lift up a finger against you." While in prison, Lloyd composed a speech which he had no opportunity to give at his trial, reaffirming his belief in non-resistance even though a king should be the enemy of his people's religion. Tindal Hart, *William Lloyd*, pp. 105–12.

53. Lloyd, *A Discourse of God's Ways of Disposing of Kingdoms* (London, 1691); Burnet, *A Pastoral Letter writ by . . . Gilbert Lord Bishop of Sarum to the Clergy of his Diocese concerning the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy to K. William and Q. Mary* (London, 1689).

54. In 1692, Parliament ordered Burnet's *Pastoral Letter* publicly burned, both Houses resolving that "the assertion of King William and Queen Mary's being King and Queen by conquest, was highly injurious to their Majesties, and inconsistent with the principles on which the government is founded." Thomas Lathbury, *A History of the Nonjurors* (London, 1845), p. 74.

55. See Tindal Hart, *William Lloyd*, pp. 120–26; cf. Burnet, *HOT*, III, 244–59.

56. Stillingfleet, *A Discourse Concerning the Unreasonableness of a New Separation, on Account of the Oaths, with an Answer to the History of Passive Obedience, so far as it relates to Them* (1689), *Works*, III, 939.

57. The full title is *An Enquiry into the Measures of Submission to the Supreme Authority; and of the Grounds upon which it may be lawful or necessary for Subjects to defend their Religion, Lives and Liberties*, n.d. or p.; cf. Burnet's *An Enquiry into the present State of Affairs; and in particular, Whether we owe Allegience to the King in these Circumstances? And Whether we are bound to treat with Him and call Him back or not?* (London, 1689).

58. Burnet, *HOT*, III, 329–30.

59. Tillotson, Sermon XXXVII (18 June 1690), *Works*, III, 441. [The conception of England as the prophetic nation and the new Israel was advanced all through the seventeenth century. See the work of Christopher Hill, especially *Milton and the English Revolution* (New York, 1977), *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (New York, 1972); see also Arthur H. Williamson, "The Jewish Dimension of the Scottish Apocalypse: Climate, Covenant and World Renewal," in Yosef Kaplan, Henry Méchoulan, Richard H. Popkin, eds., *Menasseh Ben Israel and His World* (Leiden, 1989), pp. 7–30, and Barbara Tuchman, *Bible and Sword in England and Palestine* (New York, 1956). —RHP]

60. Tillotson, Sermon XXXVII, *Works*, III, 443.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 128.

62. *Ibid.*, pp. 428–29.

63. Lambeth Palace Library, MS. 690.

64. Cf. F. G. James, "The Bishops in Politics, 1688–1714," in W. A. Aiken and B. D. Henning, eds., *Conflict in Stuart England: Essays in Honour of Wallace Notestein* (London and New York, 1960), pp. 229–57.

CHAPTER THREE

1. A similarity in opinion and prose style between S. P.'s pamphlet and known works of Simon Patrick have led to a general attribution of this tract to him. Such an attribution is, however, not certain, for reasons given by Alexander Taylor, the editor of Patrick's *Works*. Taylor pointed out: (1) that Patrick did not acknowledge authorship of the *Brief Account* in his *Autobiography*, where he was careful to do so in other cases of works he had published anonymously; (2) that Patrick's *Autobiography* indicates such pressing concern with other matters in 1662 that it is unlikely that he had the time to write it; (3) that in 1662, Patrick had not been in residence at Cambridge for some years. Taylor pointed out further that "G. B." was probably not, as some have thought, Gilbert Burnet, because Burnet in 1662 was in Scotland, and when he did visit both English universities in 1663, he was but nineteen years of age. Taylor noted also that there is a contemporary suggestion that the initials of both correspondents were arbitrarily chosen. Nonetheless he concluded, and he was right, that the tract "is unques-

tionably in general sentiment and scope such as might consistently have been written" by Patrick. Patrick, *Works*, I, Preface, xliii–xlviii.

2. Burnet published this work anonymously, but later admitted authorship. See Clarke and Foxcroft, *Life of Gilbert Burnet*, pp. 74–75.

3. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 52–79.

4. The first edition was published anonymously. Fowler's name appeared on the title-page of the second (London, 1671).

5. [Glanvill's extrapolation of Bacon's thought has been examined by Popkin in his article, "Joseph Glanvill's Continuation of the New Atlantis," pp. 84–94. —RHP]

6. "Anti-fanatical Religion and Free Philosophy," *Essays on Several Important Subjects in Philosophy and Religion* (London, 1676), pp. 1–2.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

13. Burnet, *Modest and Free Conference*, p. 83.

14. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, p. 340.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 341.

16. Burnet, *Modest and Free Conference*, p. 89.

17. S. P., *Brief Account*, p. 7.

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

20. *Ibid.*

21. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, pp. 190–91.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 191.

23. S. P., *Brief Account*, p. 10.

24. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, p. 103.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

26. Burnet, *Modest and Free Conference*, pp. 84–85.

27. Glanvill, "Anti-fanatical Religion," *Essays*, p. 18.

28. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, p. 46.

29. Glanvill, "Anti-fanatical Religion," *Essays*, p. 17.

30. S. P., *Brief Account*, p. 10.

31. Burnet, *Modest and Free Conference*, pp. 84–85.

32. [There has been a great deal of interest in the development of science in seventeenth-century England. One of the aspects of the subject receiving special attention has been the relation of the Latitudinarians to the Royal Society, especially their work and influence in its founding and early years. See, for example, the chapter "Religion and Science" in Shapiro's biography, *John Wilkins*, pp. 224–50, and her article "Latitudinariansism and Science in Seventeenth-Century England," in *The Intellectual Revolution of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Charles Webster (Boston, 1974), pp. 286–316. See also Lotte Mulligan, "Anglicans, Latitudinarianism and Science in Seventeenth-Century England," *Annals of Science*, III (June, 1973), 213–19, and "Civil War Politics, Religion and the Royal Society," in *The Intellectual Revolution of the Seventeenth Century*, pp. 317–99. A recent study of the minor clergy associated with the Royal Society shows they have some points in common with the Latitudinarians; see Rogers Miles, "The Clerical Virtuosi of the

Royal Society: 1663–1687" (Princeton University dissertation, 1987). Other works touching on the relation of the Latitudinarians to the Royal Society in particular and to science in general include Margery Purver, *The Royal Society: Concept and Creation* (London, 1967); Margaret C. Jacob, "The Church and the Foundation of the Newtonian World View," *Journal of European Studies*, I (1971), 128–48; Roger Hahn, *The Anatomy of a Scientific Institution: The Royal Academy of Sciences* 1666–1803 (Berkeley, 1971); Geoffrey Holmes, "Science, Reason, and Religion in the Age of Newton," *British Journal for the History of Science*, XI (1978), 164–71; Michael C. W. Hunter, *Science and Society in Restoration England* (Cambridge, 1981).—RHP]

33. S. P., *Brief Account*, p. 14.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
36. *Ibid.*
37. Glanvill, "Anti-fanatical Religion," *Essays*, p. 50.
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 50–51.
39. S. P., *Brief Account*, p. 22.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
44. *Ibid.*
45. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, p. 295.
46. Glanvill, "Anti-fanatical Religion," *Essays*, p. 25.
47. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, p. 109.
48. [See J. Minton Batten, *John Dury: Advocate of Christian Reunion* (Chicago, 1944).—RHP]
49. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, p. 316.
50. Glanvill, "Anti-fanatical Religion," *Essays*, p. 31.
51. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, p. 296.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 309.
53. *Ibid.*, pp. 308–09.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 319.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 328.
56. Burnet, *Modest and Free Conference*, p. 40.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
58. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, p. 335.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
61. S. P., *Brief Account*, pp. 11–12.
62. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, p. 41.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
64. Burnet, *HOT*, I, 347–48.
65. Glanvill, "Anti-fanatical Religion," *Essays*, p. 42.
66. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, p. 112.
67. Burnet, *HOT*, I, 348–49.
68. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, p. 113.
69. Burnet, *HOT*, I, 348.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 349.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. [See his chapter on the Great Tew Circle in *Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans.*—RHP]

2. Cragg, *From Puritanism to the Age of Reason*, p. 63. Cf. Norman Sykes, *From Sheldon to Secker: Aspects of English Church History, 1660–1768* (Cambridge, 1959), p. 146.

3. On Sprat as a High Churchman, see George Every, *The High Church Party, 1688–1718* (London, 1956), p. 46.

4. Fowler, in *The Charge of the Bishop of Gloucester, Delivered to the Clergy of his Diocese in the late Triennial Visitation* (London, 1707), pp. 6–8, deplored the fact that "to the old blackening distinctions [among Anglicans] is now added that of *High Church* and *Low Church*." The first, he said, was an abusive term signifying "an uncharitable froward spirit toward all dissenting people, be they never so peaceable and inoffensive . . . a warmer zeal for ceremonies, than for the great substantials of religion; for ecclesiastical rites, than for the laws of God." "Low Church" meant "a party which profess a great kindness for the Church, but (like the waterman) look one way and row another, and are in the interest of the Church's adversaries." Note that one definition of a Latitudinarian was that he "looks toward Lambeth, and rows to Geneva."

5. Cf. Every, *High Church Party*, pp. 19–60, and G. V. Bennet, *White Kennett, 1660–1728, Bishop of Peterborough* (London, 1957), pp. 26–110.

6. [See Marshall, "The Ecclesiology of the Latitude-Men," pp. 407–27.—RHP]

7. The Tory Roger l'Estrange described a Trimmer as follows: "A Trimmer is a man of latitude, as well in politics as divinity: an advocate both for liberty of practice in the State, and for liberty of conscience in the Church; a kind of comprehensive Christian, that makes more conscience of indulging a division from the Church, than of preserving unity in it; a man of project, every inch of him; and one that for the ease of travellers toward the New Jerusalem, proposes the cutting of the broad way and the narrow, both into one. He has more charity for the transgressors of the law, than he has for the observers of it; and more, for the offence, than for the Constitution. Where the government says he cannot yield, the Trimmer says the government must. . . . He takes away the rule, that the people may not break it." H. C. Foxcroft, *The Life and Letters of Sir George Savile, First Marquis of Halifax* (2 vols., London, 1898), II, 273–74.

8. See his *Character of a Trimmer*, in Walter Raleigh, ed., *The Complete Works of George Savile, First Marquess of Halifax* (Oxford, 1912), esp. pp. 67–77.

9. The Revolution Settlement, G. M. Trevelyan declared, "was a victory of . . . the spirit and mentality of Halifax the Trimmer." *The English Revolution, 1688–1689* (New York, 1939), p. 266. Cf. B. Behrens, "The Whig Theory of the Constitution in the Reign of Charles II," *Cambridge Historical Journal*, VII (1941–43), 42–71, p. 70.

10. The phrase is that of the Nonjuring Bishop Thomas Ken, who was extruded from his see of Bath and Wells in 1691 to make way for the Latitudinarian Richard Kidder. Such men as Kidder, Ken said, were traitors ('traditours') "who would betray the baptismal faith." On Hoadly and Watson, see Norman Sykes, *Church and State in the XVIIIth Century* (Cambridge, 1934), pp. 332–78; also Sykes, "Benjamin Hoadly," in F. J. C. Hearnshaw, *The Social and Political Ideas of Some English Thinkers of the Augustan Age* (Harrap, 1928); and Sykes, *William Wake, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1657–1737* (2 vols., Cambridge, 1957), I, 150 *et seq.*

11. Richard Watson, "The Expediency of Revising the Liturgy and Articles" (1790), in *Miscellaneous Tracts on Religious, Political, and Agricultural Subjects* (2 vols., London, 1815), II, 108; quoted in Sykes, *Church and State*, p. 353.

12. [See James E. Force, *William Whiston: Honest Newtonian* (Cambridge, 1985).—RHP].

13. Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire, Geneva, MSS. Inventaire 1569. Collection J. A. Turrettini, Correspondance TAN–SWI, fol. 48; quoted in Sykes, *William Wake*, II, 150.

14. For this reason one might take issue with Sykes, *From Sheldon to Secker*, p. 146. There he wrote, "At the other extreme the Latitudinarian umbrella sheltered individuals of heterodox opinions, verging on Socinianism and Arianism." This statement is certainly unexceptionable for the period covered by the book (1660–1768). But Dean Sykes illustrated it with an observation made in 1674 by Ralph Cudworth to the Arminian Phillipus van Limborch: "Certainly in our English Church, just as in Noah's Ark were all sorts of animals (if I may so express it), are all kinds of Protestants: Calvinists, Remonstrants, and I believe even Socinians, all dwelling here, united with no apparent discord in one and the same communion." Dean Sykes's suggestion thus appears to be that some Latitudinarians were Socinians in 1674; but if my definition of the boundaries of seventeenth-century Latitudinarianism is valid, then a Socinian in 1674 was, *ipso facto*, not a Latitudinarian.

15. Sir Philip Warwick, *Memoires of the reigne of King Charles I, with a Continuation to the Happy Restauration of King Charles II* (London, 1701), p. 89.

PART TWO

1. Sprat, *The History of the Royal Society of London, for the Improving of Natural Knowledge* (London, 1667), p. 374.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 370.

3. Lloyd, *A Sermon Preached before the King at White-Hall, on Decemb. 1, MDLVII, Being the First Sunday in Advent* (London, 1668), p. 16.

4. Preface to the Reader.

5. Stillingfleet, *Origines Sacrae* (2), *Works*, II (ii), 1. (Note: "(2)" after a reference to the *Origines Sacrae* will hereafter indicate the unfinished revised version which Stillingfleet was writing at the time of his death; Volume II of his *Works* has two sets of pages: "(i)" indicates the first, "(ii)" the other. [*Origines Sacrae* (2) is not really a new edition so much as a new work dealing with threats that Stillingfleet saw emerging from the new philosophy of Descartes and Spinoza. See Carroll, *Common-Sense Philosophy of Religion of Bishop Stillingfleet* and Popkin, "The Philosophy of Bishop Stillingfleet," pp. 303–31.—RHP]

6. Stillingfleet, *A Discourse in Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, *Works*, III, 427.

7. John Scott, *A Sermon Preached at Fulham . . . At the Consecration of . . . Edward Lord Bishop of Worcester, Simon, Lord Bishop of Chichester and Gilbert, Lord Bishop of Bristol* (London, 1689), p. 17.

8. Stillingfleet, *Origines Sacrae* (2), *Works*, II (ii), 80.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 93.

10. [There has been a scholarly debate over the development of atheism in the seventeenth century, especially in England. For a detailed discussion of the

problem, see David Berman, *A History of Atheism in Britain: From Hobbes to Russell* (London, 1988). For an examination of Spinoza's impact on the Cambridge Platonists, especially Henry More, see Rosalie L. Colie, *Light and Enlightenment: A Study of the Cambridge Platonists and the Dutch Arminians* (Cambridge, 1957). —RHP]

11. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Everyman's ed., London, 1957), p. 55. [For a discussion of Hobbes in the seventeenth century, see Samuel I. Mintz, *The Hunting of the Leviathan: Seventeenth-Century Reactions to the Materialism and Moral Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes* (Cambridge, 1962).—RHP]

12. Stillingfleet, *Ecclesiastical Cases Relating to the Duties and Rights of the Parochial Clergy*, Preface (1698), *Works*, III, 619.

13. [On Lord Herbert of Cherbury and seventeenth-century natural religion, see the study by Mario M. Rossi, *La Vita, Le Opere e i Tempi de Eduardo, Lord Herbert di Chirbury*, 3 vols. (Florence, 1947) and also P. Rossi, *The Dark Abyss of Time*. See also Richard H. Popkin's essays "Polytheism, Deism, and Newton" and "The Crisis of Polytheism and the Answers of Vossius, Cudworth, and Newton," in James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin, eds., *Essays on the Context, Nature, and Influence of Isaac Newton's Theology* (Dordrecht, 1990).—RHP]

14. [For interpretations of Locke's and Newton's religious views, see Richard S. Westfall, *Never at Rest: A Biography of Isaac Newton* (Cambridge, 1980) and his article "Isaac Newton's *Theologiae gentilis origines philosophicae*," in W. Warren Wagar, ed., *The Secular Mind: Transformations of Faith in Modern Europe: Essays Presented to Franklin L. Baumer* (New York, 1982). A recent polemical work by Michael J. Buckley, *At the Origins of Modern Atheism* (New Haven, 1987), sees extreme irreligious tendencies in Newton's natural theology.—RHP]

15. Tillotson, Sermon XXI, *Works*, III, 224.

16. Gilbert Burnet, *Four Discourses Delivered to the Diocese of Sarum*, (London, 1694), p. 25.

17. Book IV, chap. XIX, 5, 6.

18. Glanvill, "Anti-fanatical Religion," *Essays*, p. 28.

19. [Christopher Hill has described these groups in *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas during the English Revolution* (New York, 1972).—RHP]

20. Stillingfleet, *A Discourse concerning the Idolatry Practised in the Church of Rome and the Hazard of Salvation in the Communion of it*, *Works*, V, 92.

21. Glanvill, "The Usefulness of Real Philosophy to Religion," in *Essays on Several Important Subjects in Philosophy and Religion* (London, 1676), p. 13.

22. Sprat, *History of the Royal Society*, pp. 375–76.

23. Stillingfleet, *A Discourse concerning the Idolatry Practised in the Church of Rome*, *Works*, V, 92.

24. Burnet, *HOT*, I, 342–43.

25. On the French background of the *machine de guerre*, see Richard H. Popkin, "Scepticism and the Counter-Reformation in France," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, LI (1960), 58–86; for its operation in Restoration England, see Louis I. Bredvold, *The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden* (Ann Arbor, 1934), pp. 73–129. [A much more extended discussion of the *machine de guerre* appeared in a work that Dr. Griffin had not seen at the time of his study, Richard H. Popkin, *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Descartes*. It first appeared in the Netherlands in 1960, and was reprinted in the United States in 1964; the third revised and augmented edition was published in 1979 (Berkeley, University of California Press). For a discussion of Veron, see the revised edition, pp. 70–78, 173.—RHP]

26. [There are eighteenth-century instances of the *machine de guerre* in France. See Richard H. Popkin, "Scepticism in the Enlightenment," *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, Theodore Besterman, ed., XXVI and XXVII (Geneva, 1963), 1321–1345. Veron's work was published in Latin in the nineteenth century (*Migne's Patrology*).—RHP]

27. [Two important studies of the circimstances surrounding his work are Henry G. Van Leeuwen, *The Problem of Certainty in English Thought: 1630–1690* (The Hague, 1963), and the chapter "The Great Tew Circle" in Trevor-Roper's *Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans*.—RHP]

28. [For a discussion of Sergeant's criticism of Locke, see John W. Yolton, "Locke's Unpublished Marginal Replies to John Sergeant," *JHI*, XII (1951), 528–59.—RHP]

29. Sergeant, *Sure Footing* (London, 1665), pp. 11–12.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 17–18.

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 25–27.

33. [See the chapter "Samuel Fisher and the Bible" in Christopher Hill's *The World Turned Upside Down*, pp. 208–15, and Richard H. Popkin, "Samuel Fisher and Spinoza," *Philosophia*, XV (1985), 219–36.—RHP]

34. Glanvill, "The Usefulness of Real Philosophy to Religion," *Essays on Several Important Subjects in Philosophy and Religion*, p. 42.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. Lambeth Palace Library, MS. 690; it may be found printed in Birch, *Life of Tillotson*, pp. 364–65.

2. Cragg, *From Puritanism to the Age of Reason*, p. 65.

3. Wilkins, *Of the Principles and Duties of Natural Religion*, ed. John Tillotson (London, 1675), pp. 3–5.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 4–5.

7. Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book II, chap. 1, 2.

8. Wilkins, *Natural Religion*, p. 5.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 7–8.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

13. [A more extreme treatment of Wilkins's theory of knowledge seen as a way of answering complete scepticism is set forth by Van Leeuwen, *The Problem of Certainty in English Thought*; by Barbara J. Shapiro, *Probability and Certainty in Seventeenth-Century England: A Study of the Relationships between Natural Science, Religion, History, Law, and Literature* (Princeton, 1983); and by M. Jamie Ferreira, *Scepticism and Reasonable Doubt: The British Naturalist Tradition in Wilkins, Hume, Reid, and Newman* (Oxford, 1986). Van Leeuwen and Shapiro present Wilkins as a kind of sceptic—a mitigated sceptic—whereas Ferreira stresses the positive, naturalistic side of his theory.—RHP]

14. Stillingfleet, *A Rational Account of the Grounds of Protestant Religion: Being a Vindication of the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury's Relation of a Conference, &c.*, *Works*, IV, 199.

15. Tillotson, Sermon I, *Works*, III, 20.
16. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, p. 61.
17. Glanvill, "Against Confidence in Philosophy, and Matters of Speculation," in *Essays on Several Important Subjects in Philosophy and Religion*, p. 17. This essay is a revision of *The Vanity of Dogmatizing* (London, 1661).
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 18–19.
19. Glanvill, *The Vanity of Dogmatizing*, p. 99.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 97; Cf. Wilkins, *Natural Religion*, p. 56.
21. Glanvill, "Anti-fanatical Religion," *Essays*, p. 29.
22. Glanvill, "Against Confidence in Philosophy," *Essays*, p. 23.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 23–24.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
27. [There has been a study of the impact of Sextus Empiricus on Glanvill by David W. Carrithers, in his dissertation "Joseph Glanvill and Pyrrhonic Scepticism: A Study in the Revival of the Doctrines of Sextus Empiricus in Sixteenth-Century and Seventeenth-Century Europe" (New York University, 1972).—RHP]
28. Glanvill's "Of Scepticism and Certainty" in *Essays on Several Important Subjects in Philosophy and Religion* is a revision of *Scire/i.*
29. Glanvill, *The Vanity of Dogmatizing*, Preface to the Reader.
30. Tillotson, Sermon CLXVII, *Works*, II, 440.
31. "There is an universal agreement in the sensation of outward objects; the eye and ear of all sensitive creatures, having the same kind of perception of visible and audible things. Those things which appear green, blue, or red to one, having the same appearance to all others." Wilkins, *Natural Religion*, pp. 56–57. Cf. Glanvill, "Against Confidence in Philosophy," in *Essays*, p. 19: "It may be one man has the impression of green from that, which in other begets the sense of yellow."
32. Cf. Tillotson, Sermon, CLXV, *Works*, II, 429.
33. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, p. 246.
34. Stillingfleet, *Origines Sacrae*, *Works*, II (i), 5.
35. Tillotson, Sermon LXXXVII, *Works*, I, 658.
36. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, p. 311.
37. Tillotson, Sermon CLXIX, *Works*, II, 456.
38. Wilkins, *Natural Religion*, p. 35.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
40. Glanvill, "Of Scepticism and Certainty," in *Essays*, p. 48.
41. *Ibid.*
42. Tillotson, Sermon LXXXVII, *Works*, I, 658.
43. Glanvill, "The Agreement of Reason and Religion," in *Essays on Several Important Subjects in Philosophy and Religion*, pp. 5–6.
44. [Jackson I. Cope, *Joseph Glanvill: Anglican Apologist* (St. Louis, 1956); Richard H. Popkin, "Joseph Glanvill: Precursor of David Hume," *JHI*, XIV (1953), 292–303; Talmor, *Glanvill: Uses and Abuses of Scepticism.*—RHP]
45. Wilkins, *Natural Religion*, p. 212.

CHAPTER SIX

1. Stillingfleet, *A Rational Account of the Grounds of Protestant Religion*, *Works*, IV, 196.
2. Tillotson, Sermon CLXV, *Works*, II, 427–28.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 428.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 429.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 431.
6. Stillingfleet, *Origines Sacrae*, *Works*, II (i), 231.
7. Glanvill, "The Agreement of Reason and Religion," in *Essays*, p. 6.
8. Tillotson, Sermon I, *Works*, III, 16.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
10. Tillotson, Sermon CLXVI, *Works*, II, 433.
11. Stillingfleet, *Origines Sacrae* (2), *Works*, II (ii), 80, 93.
12. Tillotson, Sermon III, *Works*, III, 47.
13. Stillingfleet, *Origines Sacrae* (2), *Works*, II (ii), 94.
14. [Spinoza's impact on seventeenth-century English thought has not been fully studied. Rosalie Colie dealt with the criticism of Spinoza by the Cambridge Platonists Henry More and Ralph Cudworth in *Light and Enlightenment*, and with the knowledge of Spinoza by some English thinkers of the time in "Spinoza and the Early English Deists," *JHI*, XX (1959), 23–46, and in "Spinoza in England, 1665–1730," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, CVII (1963), 183–219. Since then, Popkin has examined Stillingfleet's reaction to Spinoza in "The Philosophy of Bishop Stillingfleet," and Gerard Reedy, in *The Bible and Reason: Anglicans and Scripture in Late Seventeenth-Century England* (Philadelphia, 1985), conducts his examination of Anglican scriptural criticism against the background of Spinoza's writings. For a brief sketch of Dr. Morelli, who until now has been unknown in the Spinoza literature, see Richard H. Popkin, "Serendipity at the Clark: Spinoza and the Prince of Condé," *The Clark Newsletter*, No. 10 (Spring, 1986), pp. 4–10.—RHP]
15. Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book I, chap. viii, 3.
16. Wilkins, *Natural Religion*, p. 41.
17. See, for example, Stillingfleet, *Origines Sacrae* (2), *Works*, II (ii), 62; Wilkins, *Natural Religion*, p. 52; and Tillotson, Sermon I, *Works*, III, 19–20.
18. Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book I, chap. iii, 1–19.
19. [John W. Yolton, *Locke and the Compass of Human Understanding* (Cambridge, 1970).—RHP]
20. Stillingfleet, *An Answer to Mr. Locke's Letter, Concerning Some Passages Relating to his Essay of Human Understanding* (1697), *Works*, III, 545.
21. Tillotson, Sermon CLXVI, *Works*, II, 434.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 435–36.
23. Sermon CLXVII, *ibid.*, p. 440.
24. Glanvill, "Anti-fanatical Religion," *Essays*, p. 17.
25. Stillingfleet, *Origines Sacrae*, *Works*, II (i), 152.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 151–52.
27. Tillotson, Sermon XXVI, *Works*, III, 315.
28. Stillingfleet, *Origines Sacrae*, *Works*, II (i), 161.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 162.
30. Stillingfleet, *A Letter to a Deist, in Answer to several Objections against the Truth and Authority of the Scriptures* (1675), *Works*, II (ii), 134.

31. Tillotson, Sermon XXVI, *Works*, III, 311.

32. [For a summary of the discussion of miracles, see Burns, *The Great Debate on Miracles*.—RHP]

33. Stillingfleet, *Origines Sacrae*, *Works*, II (i), 180–81.

34. Patrick, *The Witnesses to Christianity: or, the Certainty of our Faith and Hope*, *Works*, III, 252.

35. Stillingfleet, *Origines Sacrae*, *Works*, II (i), 182.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 188.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 189.

38. Wilkins, *Natural Religion*, p. 402.

39. Stillingfleet, *Letter to a Deist*, *Works*, II (ii), 134.

40. Tillotson, Sermon LXXVIII, *Works*, I, 549.

41. Tillotson, Sermon CLXVIII, *Works*, II, 448.

42. Tillotson, Sermon LXXIII, *Works*, I, 550.

43. *Ibid.*

44. [Reedy, *The Bible and Reason*, pp. 146–55. See Bredvold, *The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden*, for a discussion of the impact of Simon's work on English thought.—RHP]

45. [Westfall, *Never at Rest: Biography of Newton*, pp. 490–91.—RHP]

46. On this problem in general, see Adam Fox, *John Mill and Richard Bentley, A Study of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament, 1675–1729* (Oxford, 1954). The quotations from Bentley appear on pp. 56–57.

47. Tillotson, Sermon CLXVIII, *Works*, II, 451.

48. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, pp. 61–62.

49. Tillotson, Sermon CLXIX, *Works*, II, 455.

50. Tillotson, Sermon CLXV, *Works*, II, 429.

51. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, p. 56.

52. Tillotson, Sermon CLXIX, *Works*, II, 455–57.

53. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, pp. 169–71.

54. Glanvill, "Anti-fanatical Religion," *Essays*, pp. 37–38.

55. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, pp. 54–55.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 86.

57. Burnet, *A Rational Method for proving the Truth of the Christian Religion, as it is Professed in the Church of England* (London, 1675), p. 25.

58. Tillotson, Sermon XXI, *Works*, III, 224.

59. *Ibid.*

60. Burnet, *An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England* (2nd ed., London, 1700), p. 322.

61. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, pp. 98–101.

62. [See Popkin, "The Crisis of Polytheism and the Answers of Vossius, Cudworth, and Newton," pp. 9–25.—RHP]

63. Tillotson, Sermon XXVI, *Works*, III, 314.

64. Sermon XXI, *ibid.*, p. 226.

65. Tillotson, *The Rule of Faith: or, an Answer to the Treatise of Mr. J(ohn) S(ergeant), entitled, Sure-Footing*, *Works*, III, 685.

66. [Jan van den Berg has studied the influence of both the Latitudinarian and Dutch liberal theologians on the development of Dutch thought in "Eighteenth-Century Dutch Translations of the Works of Some British Latitudinarian and Enlightenment Theologians," *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkegeschiedenis*, LIX (1979), 194–212.—RHP]

67. Burnet, *HOT*, I, 342. [Trevor-Roper, notably in *Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans,* and Colie in *Light and Enlightenment* have, among others, explored the influence of the Dutch Arminians.—RHP]

68. Tillotson, Sermon XXI, *Works*, III, 227.

69. Tenison, *A Discourse Concerning a Guide in Matters of Faith* (London, 1687), p. 45.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. Edward Meredith, *Some Further Remarks on the Late Account Given by Dr. Tenison of His Conference with Mr. Pulton* (London, 1688), p. 41.

2. [Since the completion of this study, some systematic explorations have, as a matter of fact, been undertaken. See, for example, Van Leeuwen, *The Problem of Certainty in English Thought,* and, more recently, the chapter on Great Tew in Trevor-Roper, *Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans.*—RHP]

3. *The Life of Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, Written by Himself* (2 vols., Oxford, 1857), I, 39–40.

4. [The tradition of Erasmus in England, and specifically his influence on churchmen like Laud, has been examined by Trevor-Roper in the chapter "Laudianism and Political Power" in *Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans.* See also his earlier book *Archbishop Laud, 1573–1645* (London, 1940).—RHP]

5. Cf. H. J. McLachlan, *Socinianism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1951), pp. 63–89. [The most complete study of Socinianism is George H. Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia, 1962).—RHP]

6. *The Poems of Lucius Carey, Viscount Falkland,* ed. A. B. Gosart (London, 1871), p. 75; quoted in Kurt Weber, *Lucius Cary, Second Viscount Falkland* (New York, 1940), p. 193.

7. See Chillingworth's "Account of what moved the Author to turn Papist," in *The Works of Wm. Chillingworth, M.A.* (3 vols., London, 1820), I, 428–35.

8. Clarendon, *Life*, I, 52.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 54–55.

10. Chillingworth, T*he Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation (1638), Works*, I, 284.

11. *Ibid.*, II, 443–44.

12. See especially S. L. Bethell, T*he Cultural Revolution of the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1951); Basil Willey, *The Seventeenth-Century Background* (London, 1934); E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (London, 1943); and J. V. Langmead Casserley, *The Christian in Philosophy,* (London, 1949), pp. 48–122. [To these studies may be added those by Popkin, *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza* (Berkeley, 1979), a revised and expanded edition of the book published earlier under the same name, and the introduction to his edition of *The Philosophy of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York, 1966) pp. 1–23. —RHP]

13. For Locke's opinion of Chillingworth, see below, footnote 21.

14. *The Truth of Christian Religion: in Six Books, Written in Latin by Hugo Grotius, And now Translated into English, with the Addition of a Seventh Book against the present Roman Church, By Symon Patrick, D.D.* (5th ed., London, 1700), pp. 77–78. The passage is quoted in Chillingworth's *Religion of Protestants, Works,* II, 443–44.

15. "It is the mark of an educated man to expect that amount of exactness in each kind which the nature of the particular subject admits. It is equally

unreasonable to accept merely probable conclusions from a mathematician and to demand strict demonstration from an orator." Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, I, iii, 4. He is writing of moral guides for "life and conduct."

16. Chillingworth, *Religion of Protestants*, *Works*, II, 349.
17. *Ibid.*, I, 217.
18. *Ibid.*, II, 450–51.
19. *Ibid.*, I, 150–51.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
21. It will be recalled that Burnet said that one of the decisive intellectual events in Tillotson's life was that "he happily fell on Chillingworth's book, which gave his mind the ply that it held ever after, and put him on a true scent." *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of the . . . Lord Archbishop of Canterbury*, p. 10. Cf. Birch, *Life of Tillotson*, pp. 5–6. Tillotson himself called Chillingworth "incomparable," and "the glory of his age and nation," and complained that Chillingworth was accused of being a Socinian "for no other cause that I know of, but his worthy and successful attempts to make Christian religion reasonable, and to discover those firm and solid foundations upon which our faith is built." Sermon CLXX, *Works*, II, 464. Burnet said that *The Religion of Protestants* was one of the "best books that we yet have" in support of the epistemological grounds of Protestantism, "writ with so clear a thread of reason, and in so lively a style, that it was justly reckoned the best book that had been writ in our language." *An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles*, Preface, p. iv. Further such praise for Chillingworth may be found in Burnet's "Discourse concerning the Infallibility and Authority of the Church," in *Four Discourses Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Sarum*, pp. 52–53. Fowler wrote, "I am sure he would do a very excellent piece of service (which all good Protestants would have cause to thank him for) that would take the pains to translate [*The Religion of Protestants*] into the Latin tongue. I think it a great pity that it should be kept locked up in our own language." *Free Discourse*, pp. 315–16. John Locke, "Some Thoughts concerning Reading and Study for a Gentleman," in *Elements of Natural Philosophy* (Whitehaven, 1744), said of Chillingworth, "Besides perspicuity, there must be also right reasoning; without which perspicuity serves but to expose the speaker: and for the attaining of this, I should propose the constant reading of Chillingworth, who by his example will teach both perspicuity, and the way of right reasoning, better than any book I know; and therefore will deserve to be read upon that account over and over again; not to say anything of his argument." (pp. 60–61). It is worth noting here that what Chillingworth termed "moral certainty," Locke called "probability." *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book IV, chap. xv.
22. Descartes, *The Principles of Philosophy*, IV, xviii.
23. For example, John Major (1469–1550), *Quartus Sententiarum* (Paris, 1519), stated (fol. 54 recto, col. 1), "*Certitudo moralis ex rudibus conjecturis procedit*," that is, that "moral certainty proceeds from rough conjectures." He discussed it in three connections: (1) that of a judge who must make a decision on inconclusive evidence; (2) whether a man might without sin marry a woman, having no "mathematical certainty" that she had not been married before; and (3) as to the sinfulness of certain acts. In the last respect, he said that it was advisable to follow the general opinions of expert moral theologians, preferably the most ancient and established ones. It is quite clear that "moral certainty" for Major referred to *probabilities*, and probabilities relating to practice rather than to mere

assent. [Recent interest in the development of the modern theory of probability has led to an examination of the role of "moral certainty." See Shapiro, *Probability and Certainty in Seventeenth-Century England* and Ian Hacking, *The Emergence of Probability: A Philosophical Study of Early Ideas about Probability, Induction and Statistical Inference* (Cambridge, 1975).—RHP]

24. [Van Leeuwen, *The Problem of Certainty in English Thought*, esp. pp. 14–32.—RHP]

25. [Cf. the chapter "Laudianism and Political Power" in Trevor-Roper, *Catholics, Anglicans and Protestants*.—RHP]

26. Cf. R. S. Bosher, *The Making of the Restoration Settlement: The Influence of the Laudians* (New York, 1951).

27. For the connections between Hooker and Thomas Aquinas, see Peter Munz, *The Place of Hooker in the History of Thought* (London, 1952), pp. 29–68.

28. For a clear and short explanation of the difference, see Hooker, *A Learned and Comfortable Sermon of the Certainty and Perpetuity of Faith in the Elect* in *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (2 vols., Everyman's ed., London and New York, 1907), I, 1–13.

29. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Secunda Secundae, Quaest, IV, a. 2, quoted in Hugh Pope, "Faith," *Catholic Encyclopedia*, V, 756.

30. Laud, *A Relation of the Conference between William Laud, then Lord Bishop of St. David's, now Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, and Mr. Fisher, the Jesuit* (1639), Sect. XVI, quoted in P. E. More and F. L. Cross, eds., *Anglicanism* (London, 1935), p. 98.

31. Hooker, *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book III, chap. viii, 15.

32. Laud, *Relation of the Conference* in More and Cross, *Anglicanism*, p. 102.

33. There was, of course, a sense in which Hooker and Laud would have agreed with Chillingworth. As Laud said, "The assurance we have of the penmen of the Scriptures, the holy Prophets and Apostles, is as great as any can be had of any human authors of like antiquity. For it is morally as evident to any pagan, that St. Matthew and St. Paul wrote the Gospel and Epistles, which bear their names, as that Cicero or Seneca wrote theirs. But that the Apostles were divinely inspired whilst they wrote them, and that they are the very Word of God expressed by them, this has ever been a matter of faith in the Church, and was so even while the Apostles themselves lived, and was never a matter of evidence or knowledge, at least as knowledge is opposed to faith. Nor could it at any time then be more demonstratively proved than now. I say, not *scientifice*, not demonstratively. For, were the Apostles living, and should they tell us that they spoke and wrote the very oracles of God, yet this were but their own testimony of themselves, and so not alone able to enforce belief on others. And for their miracles, though they were very great inducements of belief, yet were neither they evident and convincing proofs, alone and of themselves, both because there may be counterfeit miracles, and because true ones are neither infallible nor inseparable marks of truth in doctrine." *Relation of the Conference*, in More and Cross, *Anglicanism*, pp. 98–99. In other words, Christian belief considered under the aspect of the "certainty of evidence" is not, humanly speaking, of the highest order of certainty; with the addition of grace, however, faith is raised to a supernatural order, and is belief no longer, but knowledge.

34. For connections between the two groups, see Colie, *Light and Enlightenment*.

35. Benjamin Whichcote, *Moral and Religious Aphorisms* (London, 1753), Aphorism 880.

36. *Ibid.*, Aphorism 942.
37. *Ibid.*, Aphorism 977.
38. *Ibid.*, Aphorism 916.
39. Smith, "Of the True Way or Method of Attaining to Divine Knowledge," in *Select Discourses* (London, 1660), p. 61.
40. Whichcote, *Aphorisms*, Aphorism 460.
41. Henry More, *Conjecture Cabbalistics* (London, 1679), Preface.
42. "Eight Letters of Dr. Antony Tuckney, and Dr. Benjamin Whichcote . . . Written in September and October, 1651," in Whichcote, *Aphorisms*, pp. 47–48.
43. John Tulloch, *Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England*, II, 469–70.
44. Cf. Ernst Cassirer, *The Platonic Renaissance in England* (Austin, 1953), pp. 30–31. See also, J. J. De Boer, *The Theory of Knowledge of the Cambridge Platonists* (Madras, 1931).
45. [See their essays in Hutton, ed., *Henry More (1684–1687): Tercentenary Studies*.—RHP]
46. "Eight Letters . . .", in Whichcote, *Aphorisms*, p. 48.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
48. Nathaniel Culverwel, *An Elegant and Learned Discourse of the Light of Nature* (London, 1652), p. 175.
49. [Richard H. Popkin, "The 'Incurable Scepticism' of Henry More, Blaise Pascal, and Søren Kierkegaard," in Richard H. Popkin and Charles B. Schmitt, eds., *Scepticism from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Wolfenbüttel, 1987), pp. 169–84.—RHP]
50. Chillingworth, *Religion of Protestants, Works*, I, 151–52.
51. *Ibid.*, pp. 152–53.
52. Theodore Waldman, "Origins of the Legal Doctrine of Reasonable Doubt," *JHI*, XX (1959), 299–316.
53. [Since the completion of this study, the work of Popkin, Van Leeuwen, Carroll, Waldman, and Bracken, cited in this text throughout the footnotes, has attempted to give the proper emphasis. Trevor-Roper's insightful study of Great Tew, recently published in *Catholics, Anglicans and Protestants*, fills out the picture.—RHP]
54. [See John W. Packer, *The Transformation of Anglicanism, 1643–1660, with Special Reference to Henry Hammond* (Manchester, 1969).—RHP]
55. Preface to the Reader.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. For an account of the Trinitarian Controversy, see John Hunt, *Religious Thought in England* (3 vols., London, 1870–72), II, 201–222. See also his bibliography of the controversy, pp. 273–78.
2. [Williams, *Radical Reformation* p. 857.—RHP]
3. Letter of Burnet to Dr. John Williams, 2 February 1695, quoted in Clarke and Foxcroft, *Life of Gilbert Burnet*, p. 333.
4. Charles Leslie, *The Charge of Socinianism against Dr. Tillotson Considered* (London, 1695), p. 13.
5. Letter of Tillotson to Burnet, 23 October 1694, quoted in Birch, *Life of Tillotson*, p. 315.
6. McLachlan, *Socinianism in Seventeenth-Century England*, p. 295.

7. [The full-scale study of Whiston is by James E. Force, *William Whiston: Honest Newtonian*. Force has also pubished some articles on the theology of Whiston, Clarke, and other disciples of Newton in the recent collection of essays by Force and Popkin, *Context, Nature, and Influence of Newton's Theology*.—RHP]

8. For an account of Clarke, see Hunt, *Religious Thought in England*, III, 20–28; of Whiston, III, 13–20; of Whitby, II, 160–70, and III, 28–30; of Bury, II, 194–200. See also R. N. Stromberg, *Religious Liberalism in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1954), pp. 32–54; and Norman Sykes, *William Wake*, II, 150–82.

9. [See Westfall, *Never at Rest: A Biography of Isaac Newton* and the essays on Newton's theology by Force and Popkin in their collection, *Context, Nature, and Influence of Newton's Theology*.—RHP]

10. [See Richard Ashcraft, "Faith and Knowledge in Locke's Philosophy," in John Yolton ed., *John Locke: Problems and Perspectives* (London, 1969); the same author's *Revolutionary Politics and Locke's "Two Treatises of Government"* (Princeton, 1986); Dewey D. Wallace, Jr., "Socinianism, Justification by Faith and the Sources of John Locke's *The Reasonableness of Christianity*," *JHI*, XLV (1984), 49–66; and especially the work of John Yolton, including *John Locke and the Way of Ideas* (Oxford, 1956), *Locke and the Compass of Human Understanding*, and *Locke: An Introduction* (Oxford, 1985).—RHP]

11. It began with Stillingfleet's distress about John Toland's *Christianity Not Mysterious* (1696), in which Toland made use of Locke's epistemology. Stillingfleet answered Toland late in 1696 with *A Discourse in Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, in which he implicated Locke in the uses to which Toland had put the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. The rest of the correspondence is as follows: Locke, *A Letter to the Bishop of Worcester concerning some Passages, relating to Mr. Locke's Essay of Human Understanding, in a late Discourse of his Lordship's in Vindication of the Trinity* (February or March 1697); Stillingfleet, *An Answer to Mr. Locke's Letter* (May 1697); Locke, *Mr. Locke's Reply to the Bishop of Worcester's Answer to his Letter* (August 1697); Stillingfleet, *An Answer to Mr. Locke's Second Letter, wherein his Notion of Ideas is proved to be inconsistent with itself and with the Articles of Christian Faith* (early 1698); Locke, *Mr. Locke's Reply to the Bishop of Worcester's Answer to his Second Letter* (1699). Stillingfleet ended the controversy by dying later in 1699. An account of the Locke–Stillingfleet correspondence may be found in H. R. Fox Bourne, *The Life of John Locke* (2 vols., London, 1876), II, 417–37. [The Stillingfleet side of the controversy is analyzed in Carroll, *The Common-Sense Philosophy of Religion of Bishop Stillingfleet*.—RHP]

12. Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book II, chap. xxiii, 1.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

15. *Ibid.*, Book IV, chap. xviii, 3.

16. Quoted in Fox Bourne, *Life of John Locke*, I, 462.

17. Stillingfleet, *An Answer to Mr. Locke's Letter* (1697), *Works*, III, 557.

18. [See Robert E. Sullivan, *John Toland and the Deist Controversy: A Study in Adaptations* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982).—RHP]

19. Leslie Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (2 vols., New York, 1876), I, 121.

20. Stillingfleet, *An Answer to Mr. Locke's Second Letter* (1698), *Works*, III, 563.

21. British Museum Add. MSS. 24197, fols. 1–47. The bulk of the correspondence is about the date of Christ's crucifixion, Whiston adhering to a

date which Lloyd contended did not fulfill the Old Testament prophecies. The correspondence ended when Whiston frankly averred that he was "abundantly satisfied that the Arian doctrines are those delivered by our Savior and his Apostles and all the first Christians till philosophy from the ancient heretics, particularly Tertullian, prevailed at Rome the seat of Antichrist, and thence spread like a torrent over the Christian Church" (fol. 45 v).

22. On Locke's Trinitarianism cf. E. E. Worcester's excellent book, *The Religious Opinions of John Locke* (Geneva, N.Y., 1889), to which my account is much indebted.

23. Stillingfleet, *An Answer to Mr. Locke's Second Letter, Works*, III, 608.

24. ["The Philosophy of Bishop Stillingfleet," *JHI*, IX (1971), 303–31.—RHP]

25. [The most recent survey of the discussion of miracles, starting with the writings of Glanvill in the 1660s through Hume's writings in the mid-eighteenth century, is by Burns, *The Great Debate on Miracles*. See also John Redwood, *Reason, Ridicule, and Religion: The Age of Enlightenment in England, 1660–1750* (Cambridge, Mass., 1976) and Talmor, *Glanvill: Uses and Abuses of Scepticism*.—RHP]

26. Locke, *A Discourse of Miracles*, in I. T. Ramsey, ed., *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (Stanford, 1958), p. 79. Emphasis mine. The *Discourse* was written in 1702 and posthumously published in 1706.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

30. *Ibid.*

31. *Ibid.*, p. 83.

32. Worcester, *The Religious Opinions of John Locke*, p. 33.

33. Hume, "Of Miracles," Essay X in *Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding* (2nd ed., London, 1751), p. 203.

34. J. R. H. Moorman, *A History of the Church in England* (London, 1953), p. 274.

35. Leslie Stephen, in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, III, 523.

PART THREE

1. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, p. 18.

2. Glanvill, "Anti-fanatical Religion," *Essays*, p. 15.

3. Fowler, *The Design of Christianity: or, A plain Demonstration and Improvement of this Proposition, That the enduing men with Inward Real Righteousness or True Holiness, was the Ultimate End of our Saviour's Coming into the World, and is the Great Intendment of His Blessed Gospel* (London, 1671), Preface to the Reader. Fowler also stated in the Preface that this book was intended to pursue the "main and fundamental reason" of the *Free Discourse*.

4. Fowler, *Design of Christianity*, Preface to the Reader.

5. *Ibid.*

6. Glanvill, "Anti-fanatical Religion," *Essays*, p. 15.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

CHAPTER NINE

1. Defoe, *The Poor Man's Plea* (London, 1698), p. 2.

2. Lambeth Palace Library, MSS. 953, fol. 131, quoted in Edward Carpenter, *Thomas Tenison, Archbishop of Canterbury* (London, 1948), p. 285.

3. Stillingfleet, Sermon III, *Works*, I, 70.
4. Lambeth MSS. 953, fol. 131, quoted in Carpenter, *Thomas Tenison*, p. 285.
5. Tillotson, Sermon III, *Works*, III, 44.
6. Lloyd, *A Sermon Preached before the King and Queen at White-Hall, March the Twelfth, 1689/90, Being the Fast-Day* (London, 1690), p. 24.
7. Tillotson, Sermon XXXVII, *Works*, III, 443.
8. Tillotson, Sermon II, *Works*, III, 42.
9. Lloyd, *Sermon Preached before the King and Queen*, 12 March 1690, p. 27.
10. Lloyd, *Sermon Preached before the Queen at White-Hall, January the 30th. Being the day of the Martyrdom of King Charles the First* (London, 1691), p. 30.
11. *Ibid.*
12. The letter is dated 4 April 1699, and may be found in Carpenter, *Thomas Tenison*, pp. 286–87, from which these citations have been taken. For a full and useful account of the war against vice, see Dudley W. Bahlman, *The Moral Revolution of 1688* (New Haven, 1957).
13. Glanvill, "Anti-fanatical Religion," *Essays*, p. 15.
14. The full title is *Libertas Evangelica: or, A Discourse of Christian Liberty, Being a further Pursuance of the Argument of The Design of Christianity* (London, 1680).
15. III, xxii, 33. [See Robert Hoopes, *Right Reason in the English Renaissance* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962). Richard Kroll suggests that a similar emphasis is found in the neo-Epicureanism of the Restoration which stemmed from the Christianized version of Epicurus' views presented by Gassendi; see his *Material Word: Literate Culture in the Restoration and Early Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore, 1990).—RHP]
16. Tillotson, Sermon XXXVIII, *Works*, III, 446.
17. Wilkins, *Natural Religion*, pp. 176–285.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 230.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 230.
23. *Ibid.*, Preface by Tillotson.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 229.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 394–95.
26. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, pp. 87–88.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 88.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 88–89.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
35. Tillotson, Sermon LI, *Works*, III, 606.
36. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, p. 116.
37. Offor, *The Works of John Bunyan*, II, 286.
38. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, p. 116.
39. Tillotson, Sermon XL, *Works*, III, 472.
40. Many examples could be adduced, but the most dramatic is that related in Patrick's *Autobiography* of a conversation he had with John Smith while a student

at Cambridge. They were discussing the doctrine of absolute reprobation, which had troubled Patrick since he had been a young boy, so much so that he once resolved never to marry, because "most, if not all my children, might be damned." (*Works*, IX, 410). Patrick told Smith that predestination "had always seemed to me very hard, and I could never answer the objections against it, but was advised by divines to silence carnal reason. At which he fell a-laughing, and told me they were good and sound reasons which I had objected against that doctrine; and made such a representation of the nature of God to me, and of his good-will to men in Christ Jesus, as quite altered my opinion, and made me take the liberty to read such authors (which were before forbidden me) as settled me in the belief that God would really have all men be saved, of which I never after made a question, nor looked upon it as a matter of controversy, but presumed it in all my sermons." (*Ibid.*, p. 419.)

41. Tillotson, Sermon XVIII, *Works*, III, 197.
42. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, p. 255.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 218.
44. Glanvill, "Anti-fanatical Religion," *Essays*, p. 21.
45. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, pp. 217–18.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 217.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 219.
48. [A social interpretation of the Glorious Revolution and of Latitudinarian theory appears in Margaret C. Jacob, *The Newtonians and the English Revolution, 1689–1720* (Ithaca, 1976) and in Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics and Locke's "Two Treatises."* —RHP]
49. Burnet, *HOT*, VI, 236.
50. Wilkins, *Natural Religion*, pp. 295–96.
51. Burnet, "A Meditation on my voyage for England [with William of Orange] which I have writ intending it for my last words in case this expedition should prove either unsuccessful in general or fatal to myself in my own particular," in Foxcroft, *Supplement to Burnet's History of My Own Time*, p. 523.
52. Fowler, *Libertas Evangelica*, p. 35.
53. Tillotson, Sermon V, *Works*, III, 67.
54. See Fowler, *Free Discourse*, pp. 208–9, and Tillotson, Sermon II, *Works*, I, 12.
55. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, p. 205.
56. Glanvill, "Anti-fanatical Religion," *Essays*, p. 37.
57. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, pp. 257–58.
58. *Ibid.*, pp. 228–30. Cf. Tillotson, Sermon LIV, *Works*, I, 380–81.
59. Burnet, *An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles*, p. 126.
60. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, p. 157.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 165.
62. Tillotson, Sermon LXIX, *Works*, I, 508.
63. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, pp. 169–71.
64. [See David S. Katz, *Sabbath and Sectarianism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Leiden, 1988).—RHP]
65. Fowler, *Design of Christianity*, p. 63.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
68. Tillotson, Sermon CXXXV, *Works*, II, 223.
69. Offor, *The Works of John Bunyan*, II, 329.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 330.

71. Burnet, *An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles*, p. 54.
72. *Ibid.*
73. Tillotson, Sermon XLVII, *Works*, III, 554.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 555.
75. Burnet, *An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles*, p. 55.
76. Tillotson, Sermon CXLIX, *Works*, II, 320–21.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 320.
78. Burnet, *An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles*, p. 268.
79. Tillotson, Sermon XXV, *Works*, III, 282.
80. Burnet, *An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles*, p. 120.
81. See Tillotson, Sermon LIII, *Works*, I, 376.
82. Sermon CLXXIII, *ibid.*, II, 484.
83. Burnet, *An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles*, p. 124.
84. Tillotson, Sermon CLXXIII, *Works*, II, 484.
85. *Ibid.*
86. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, p. 316.
87. *Ibid.*, p. 317.
88. *Ibid.*, p. 316.
89. Fowler, *Design of Christianity*, p. 171.
90. *Ibid.*, p. 234.
91. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, pp. 313–14.
92. Tillotson, Sermon LXIX, *Works*, I, 507.
93. Sermon CLV, *ibid.*, II, 361.
94. Wilkins, *Natural Religion*, p. 396.
95. Burnet, *An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles*, p. 172.
96. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, p. 252.
97. The problem, of course, was Article XVIII, which stated that "They also are accursed, that presume to say, that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professes, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law, and the light of nature; for Holy Scripture does set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved." Fowler confessed that this Article had once troubled him, but that "upon a little thinking I could not but heartily approve it," because "some religions are so naughty the more the professors of them live up to them, the worse men they must necessarily be." The sense of the Article, he finally decided, was this: "Let him be accursed that says salvation is to be had in any religion without Jesus Christ. Those of us that hope well of such men as Socrates, Tully, Epictetus, etc., don't think that they are not beholden to Christ for salvation." Letter to the Rev. John Wicks, 25 January 1681/82, Add. MSS. 33494, fol. 71 v.
98. Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, I, xxi, 1.
99. *Ibid.*, I, xi, 6. Note also that Hooker believed that divine grace was necessary even for the fulfillment of the duties imposed by the Law of Nature (III, viii, 6).
100. Tillotson, Sermon CLV, *Works*, II, 361.
101. Sermon VI, *ibid.*, III, 71.
102. Wilkins, *Natural Religion*, pp. 285–372.
103. Fowler, *Design of Christianity*, p. 306.
104. See Richard Foster Jones, "Science and English Prose Style in the Third Quarter of the Seventeenth Century" and "The Attack on Pulpit Eloquence in the Restoration: An Episode in the Development of the Neo-Classical Standard for

Prose," in R. F. Jones and others, *The Seventeenth Century: Studies in the History of English Thought and Literature from Bacon to Pope* (Stanford, 1951), pp. 75–110 and pp. 111–42.

105. Some discussions of the Latitudinarians as a group in this respect can be found in W. Fraser Mitchell, *English Pulpit Oratory from Andrewes to Tillotson* (London, 1932), but I do not think that he accords them sufficient emphasis. [For other assessments, see Brian Vickers, "The Royal Society and English Prose Style: A Reassessment," in the collection of papers read at a Clark Library seminar, *Rhetoric and the Pursuit of Truth: Language Change in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Los Angeles, 1985), and the study by Douglas L. Patey, *Probability and Literary Form: Philosophic Theory and Literary Practice in the Augustan Age* (Cambridge, 1984). For a description of Wilkins's contribution to "plain style" and the reform of pulpit oratory, see Shapiro, *John Wilkins,* esp. pp. 70–80. —RHP]

106. See Fowler, *Free Discourse,* p. 104 *et seq.*; Glanvill, "Anti-fanatical Religion," *Essays,* pp. 41–46; and Burnet, *HOT,* II, 347–49.

107. Glanvill, "Anti-fanatical Religion," *Essays,* p. 45.

108. Burnet, *HOT,* II, 348.

109. Sprat, *History of the Royal Society,* p. 113.

110. Wilkins, *Essay toward a Real Character and a Philosophical Language* (London, 1668), p. 170.

111. Mitchell, *English Pulpit Oratory,* p. 330.

112. Wilkins, *Ecclesiastes, or, The Gift of Preaching as it Falls Under the Rules of Art* (London, 1647), p. 105.

113. Patrick, *A Friendly Debate between a Conformist and a Nonconformist, Works,* V, 278.

114. Wilkins, *Natural Religion,* pp. 211–12.

115. Tillotson, Sermon CLXXIII, *Works,* II, 485.

116. *Ibid.* Compare Patrick: "If you say that [faith] is a taking of Christ, of whole Christ, an applying of what he has done to the soul, a cleaving to him, or in such like words express yourself; all these seem to have more of mystery and of gospel secrets in them . . . and so they win more credit with those men who are not wont to like anything which every child may understand as well as themselves." *The Parable of the Pilgrim,* in *Works,* IV, 114.

117. Glanvill, *Catholick Charity Recommended in a Sermon . . . In order to the abating the Animosities among Christians, that have been occasioned by Differences in Religion* (London, 1669), p. 29.

118. *Ibid.,* p. 26.

CHAPTER TEN

1. Tillotson, Sermon XXXIV, *Works,* III, 402.

2. Glanvill, *Catholick Charity Recommended,* p. 29.

3. Tillotson, Sermon XXXIV, *Works,* III, 402.

4. Fowler, *A Resolution of this Case, viz. Whether it be Lawful to separate from the Public Worship of God in the Parochial Assemblies of England* (London, 1683), p. 47.

5. Fowler, *Free Discourse,* p. 328.

6. Erasmus, *Opera omnia* (ed. J. Le Clerc, Ludg. Bat., 1703–6), V, 1410, "Paraclesis," 1516; quoted in Roland H. Bainton, ed., Sebastian Castellio, *Concerning Heretics* (New York, 1935), p. 30.

7. P. S. Allen, ed., *Opus epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami* (7 vols., Oxford, 1906–28), Letter 858, III, 365; quoted in Bainton, ed., Castellio, *Concerning Heretics*, p. 32.

8. *Ibid.*, Letter 1334, V, 177; quoted in Joseph Lecler, *Toleration and the Reformation* (2 vols, New York and London, 1960), I, 127.

9. [See Colie, *Light and Enlightenment*, and Trevor-Roper, "The Great Tew Circle," in *Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans*.—RHP]

10. More, *Enchiridion ethicum* (London, 1667), p. 9; quoted in Cassirer, *The Platonic Renaissance in England*, p. 28.

11. Smith, *Select Discourses*, pp. 1–3.

12. Whichcote, Discourse XLVIII, *The Works of the Reverend Benjamin Whichcote, D.D.* (4 vols., Aberdeen, 1751), II, 387–88.

13. Whichcote, *Aphorisms*, Aphorism 220.

14. *Ibid.*, Aphorism 712.

15. For the connections of Falkland's circle with the thought of Erasmus, Castellio, and Acontius, see Weber, *Lucius Cary*, pp. 213–74. [See also Trevor-Roper's brief but incisive account in "The Great Tew Circle," *Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans*, pp. 189–90, 193–5.—RHP]

16. Bainton, ed., Castellio, *Concerning Heretics*, p. 122. [For a recent discussion of Castellio, see Elizabeth Feist Hirsch's introduction to her edition of Castellio's *De arte dubitande et confidendi ignorandi et sciendi* (Leider, 1981), pp. 1–12, and her earlier article "Castellio's *De arte dubitandi* and the Problem of Religious Liberty," in B. Becker, ed., *Autour de Michel Servet et de Sebastien Castillion* (Haarlem, 1953), pp. 244–58.—RHP]

17. Bainton, ed., Castellio, *Concerning Heretics*, p. 122.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 139–140.

19. Acontius, *Satan's Strategems, or The Devil's Cabinet-Council Discovered* (London, 1648), pp. 78–82.

20. *Works*, II, 41–42.

21. "A Tract on the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; and concerning the Church's mistaking itself about Fundamentals," *The Works of the Ever Memorable Mr. John Hales of Eton* (3 vols., Glasgow, 1765), I, 72.

22. Chillingworth, *Religion of Protestants, Works*, II, 42.

23. J. R. Tanner, *English Constitutional Conflicts of the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1928), p. 82.

24. *Of Fundamentals, The Works of the Reverend and Learned Henry Hammond, D.D.* (4 vols., London, 1684), I, 499. [See Packer, *The Transformation of Anglicanism*.—RHP]

25. Tillotson, Sermon XLIX, *Works*, III, 590.

26. Foxcroft, ed., *Supplement to Burnet's History of My Own Time*, p. 460.

27. C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama* (Oxford, 1954), p. 459. [For an account of Hooker's profound influence on Chillingworth, see Robert R. Orr, *Reason and Authority: The Thought of William Chillingworth* (Oxford, 1967). See also Trevor-Roper's references to Hooker in "The Great Tew Circle," *Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans*, pp. 191ff.—RHP]

28. *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, I, ii, 6.

29. *Ibid.*, VIII, i, 2.

30. Tillotson to Penn, 26 January 1686; the letter may be found in *Passages from the Life and Writings of William Penn* (Philadelphia, 1882), pp. 311–12.

31. Stillingfleet, "Of the Mischief of Separation" (Sermon XVIII), *Works*, I, 283.

32. Stillingfleet, *The Unreasonableness of Separation: or, An Impartial Account of the History, Nature, and Pleas of the Present Separation from the Communion of the Church of England*, *Works*, II (ii), 605.

33. *Ibid.*

34. *Ibid.*

35. *Ibid.*, p. 606.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 608.

37. Stillingfleet, *Several Conferences between a Romish Priest, A Fanatick-Chaplain, and a Divine of the Church of England, concerning the Idolatry of the Church of Rome*, *Works*, IV, 50.

38. Stillingfleet, *Irenicum, A Weapon-Salve for the Church's Wounds; or, the Divine Right of Particular Forms of Church Government* (2nd ed., London, 1662), p. 132.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 141.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 150.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 175.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 395.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 396.

44. *Ibid.*

45. *Ibid.*, p. 415.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 416.

47. Burnet, *HOT*, I, 344. The *Irenicum*, Burnet said, was written "with so much learning and moderation, that it was esteemed a masterpiece. . . . [It] took with many; but was cried out upon by others, as an attempt against the Church. Yet the argument was managed with so much learning and skill, that none of either side ever undertook to answer it." *HOT*, I, 343–44.

48. Stillingfleet, *The Bishop of Worcester's Charge to the Clergy of his Diocese*, 11 September 1690, *Works*, III, 622.

49. *The Unreasonableness of Separation*, *ibid.*, II, 580.

50. Stillingfleet, *Several Conferences . . . concerning the Idolatry of the Church of Rome*, *ibid.*, IV, 49. In answer to an inquiry about the *Irenicum* by the 'Romish Priest,' the Anglican divine said, "I believe there are many things in it, which if Dr. Stillingfleet were to write now, he would not have said; for there are some things which show his youth, and want of due consideration; others which he yielded too far in hopes of gaining the Dissenting parties to the Church of England; but upon the whole matter I am satisfied that the book was written with a design to serve the Church of England." Cf. Robert Grove's discussion of the *Irenicum* and defense of Stillingfleet in *An Answer to Mr. Lowth's Letter to Dr. Stillingfleet in another Letter to a Friend* (London, 1687), pp. 5, 19, and *passim*.

51. Fowler, *Free Discourse*, p. 323.

52. Tenison, *An Argument for Union*, p. 5.

53. *Ibid.*

54. Chillingworth, "The Apostolical Institution of Episcopacy Demonstrated," *Works*, II, 531; quoted in Fowler, *Free Discourse*, pp. 323–24.

55. Tenison, *An Argument for Union*, p. 5.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

57. [See Westfall, *Never at Rest: A Biography of Isaac Newton*, pp. 331–34.—RHP]

58. Fowler to John Wicks, 25 January 1682, Add. MSS. 33498, fol. 71. The reference to Stillingfleet is to his *Rational Account of the Grounds of Protestant Religion*, *Works*, IV, 53–54.

59. *Ibid.* Cf. Patrick's letter on the same subject to John Mapletoft, 8 February 1683, Letter XXXVII, *Works*, IX, 617.

60. Fowler, *A Resolution of . . . whether it be Lawful to Separate from the Publick Worship of God*, p. 47.

61. Stillingfleet, *The Unreasonableness of Separation*, *Works*, II (ii), 622.

62. Fowler, *Libertas Evangelica*, p. 200.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 210.

64. Burnet, *Modest and Free Conference*, p. 40.

65. Tillotson, Sermon XXXI, *Works*, III, 365.

66. Fowler, *Libertas Evangelica*, p. 196.

67. Tenison, *An Argument for Union*, p. 22.

68. Stillingfleet, "Of the Mischief of Separation," *Works*, I, 283.

69. Tillotson, Sermon XXXVII, *Works*, III, 446.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 447.

71. Fowler, *Libertas Evangelica*, p. 288.

72. Tillotson, Sermon XXXVII, *Works*, III, 447–48.

73. Stillingfleet, *The Unreasonableness of Separation*, *Works*, II (ii), p. 562.

74. *Ibid.*, p. 601.

75. Fowler, *Libertas Evangelica*, p. 225.

76. *Ibid.*, p. 229.

77. Patrick, *Works*, V, 270.

78. Tindal Hart, *William Lloyd*, p. 42.

79. Fowler, *Libertas Evangelica*, p. 236.

80. *Ibid.*, pp. 239–40.

81. A brief summary of these laws might be useful. Besides the Five-Mile Act, the so-called Clarendon Code (for which Clarendon was not responsible) included the Corporation Act (1661), the Conventicle Act (1664), and the Act of Uniformity (1662). The Corporation Act forbade any to hold municipal office who had not abjured the Solemn League and Covenant, taken an oath against the legality of armed resistance to the King and those commissioned by him, and received communion according to the Anglican rubric; this disqualified from the specified offices some Presbyterians, certain sectaries, and all Roman Catholics. The Conventicle Act declared illegal any meeting for worship at which five persons in addition to a family were present. Most important was the Act of Uniformity, which imposed on all clergymen the use of the newly-revised Book of Common Prayer, and required subscription "in these words and no other" to a statement of "unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained and prescribed" in the Prayer Book. Since the revision of the Prayer Book had taken account of practically none of the substantial objections made to it by Presbyterians at the Savoy Conference, the Act of Uniformity effectively excluded them from the National Church. In 1662, more than 2000 divines, about twenty per cent of the clergymen in England, relinquished their benefices because they could not submit to the requirements of the Act of Uniformity; while many later conformed, "it is to this exodus of 1662 that the origin of modern Dissent is to be traced." (Tanner, *English Constitutional Conflicts of the Seventeenth Century*, p. 228). The Test Act of 1673 prohibited anyone to hold any civil or military post by royal appointment who would not receive communion according to the rites of the Established Church and take an oath against transubstantiation; the chief purpose of this Act was to remove Catholics from government, but it also affected those Protestant Dissenters who felt that they

could not in conscience resort to the expedient of occasional conformity. The Test Act of 1678 applied the provisions of the first Test Act to membership in either House of Parliament. [See also Hugh Trevor-Roper's study, *Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon* (Oxford, 1975).—RHP]

82. Tenison, *An Argument for Union*, p. 6.
83. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
84. Stillingfleet, *The Unreasonableness of Separation*, *Works*, II (ii), 602.
85. *Ibid.*
86. *Ibid.*, 466.
87. Fowler, *Libertas Evangelica*, p. 249.
88. Tenison, *An Argument for Union*, p. 21.
89. This correspondence may be found in *Passages from the Life and Writings of William Penn*, pp. 310–14. Cf. Birch, *Life of Tillotson*, pp. 124–25.
90. Fowler, *The Charge of the Bishop of Gloucester*, p. 10.
91. Stillingfleet, "Of the Mischief of Separation," *Works*, I, 298.
92. Fowler, *Libertas Evangelica*, p. 235.
93. Stillingfleet, "Of the Mischief of Separation," *Works*, I, 298.
94. Stillingfleet, *The Unreasonableness of Separation*, *Works*, II (ii), 562. The other cases were (1) idolatrous worship, and (2) false doctrine being imposed instead of true. The Roman Church, the Latitudinarians thought, was guilty of all three.
95. Glanvill, *Catholick Charity Recommended*, p. 60.
96. Tenison, *An Argument for Union*, p. 2.
97. Burton was an intimate friend of Wilkins, Tillotson, and Stillingfleet, and a small club formed by Wilkins to advance the cause of comprehension used to meet in his chambers. Anthony à Wood described him as "that great Trimmer and Latitudinarian." Leslie Stephen, *Dictionary of National Biography*, III, 460.
98. References are to "The Copy of the Lord Keeper's, or Dr. Wilkins' Proposals," in *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, Part III, p. 25.
99. *Ibid.*, pp. 34–35.
100. *Ibid.*, p. 157.
101. *Ibid.*
102. See Every, *The High Church Party*, pp. 19–42.
103. Birch, *The Life of Tillotson*, p. 167. For recent accounts of the proceedings of the Commission, see Carpenter, *Thomas Tenison*, pp. 89–119, and Every, *The High Church Party*, pp. 43–60.
104. Stillingfleet, *The Bishop of Worcester's Charge to the Clergy of His Diocese*, *Works*, III, 631. The Latitudinarians were divided on occasional conformity, the practice by which Dissenters could circumvent the Test Acts by 'occasional' reception of Holy Communion according to the Anglican rite. Stillingfleet, for example, could not understand how a man's conscience could permit him to conform occasionally and dissent regularly, and Fowler registered objections to it in 1707 in his *Charge to the Bishop of Gloucester*, pp. 9–10. But Tenison approved. See Carpenter, *Thomas Tenison*, pp. 116–19.
105. Cf. Cassirer, *The Platonic Renaissance in England*, pp. 35–36.
106. Whichcote, *Aphorisms*, Aphorism 569.
107. Tulloch, *Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy*, I, 141.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. See, for example, Carpenter, *Thomas Tenison*, p. 109.
2. Bodleian Library, Lister MSS. 34, fol. 37, John Brooke to Dr. Martin Lister, 14 December 1672; quoted in Dorothy Stimson, "Dr. Wilkins and the Royal Society," *Journal of Modern History*, III (1941), p. 563.

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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

This essay does not pretend to be exhaustive, but merely contains notices of those books which ought, for one reason or another, to be mentioned, or which were especially useful in the preparation of this dissertation. There has been very little written about Latitudinarianism. The best published accounts of seventeenth-century Latitudinarianism are still those of S. P. , Fowler, Burnet, and Glanvill; the reader is referred to Chapter I for a discussion of them. The best modern account is that of G. R. Cragg, *From Puritanism to the Age of Reason* (Cambridge, 1950), pp. 61–87. Some mention of Latitudinarianism may be found in Alexander Taylor, ed., *The Works of Symon Patrick* (9 vols., Oxford, 1858), I, Preface, xxxi–xxxvii, and in Norman Sykes, *From Sheldon to Secker: Aspects of English Church History, 1660–1768* (Cambridge, 1959), pp. 150 *et seq.* Jackson I. Cope, *Joseph Glanvill, Anglican Apologist* (St. Louis, 1956), is a thorough and substantial study of Glanvill's thought, though it is not about Latitudinarianism *per se.* Marjorie Hope Nicolson, "Christ's College and the Latutude-Men," *Modern Philology*, XXVII (1929–30), pp. 35–53, is about the Cambridge Platonists. Sykes, *Church and State in the XVIIIth Century* (Cambridge, 1934) and *William Wake, Archbishop of Canterbury*, 1657–1737 (2 vols., Cambridge, 1957) have useful treatments of eighteenth-century Latitudinarianism.

Though little has been written about Latitudinarianism, much has been written about the Latitudinarians. There has been no really good book on Tillotson since Thomas Birch's *Life of the Most Reverend Dr. John Tillotson, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury* (London, 1752), but the Church Historical Society may print an excellent thesis by John Mackay, " John Tillotson: A Study of his Life and of his Contribution to the Development of English Prose," presented for the D. Phil. degree at Oxford University in 1952. Louis G. Locke, *Tillotson: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Literature* (*Anglistica* IV, Copenhagen, 1954), must be used with great care. Chapter II on "The Mind of Tillotson" (pp. 65–111) lacks insight and is often misleading; but subsequent chapters give a good idea of his prodigious literary importance in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. On Burnet, there is T. E. S. Clarke and H. C. Foxcroft, *A Life of Gilbert Burnet* (Cambridge, 1907), and Foxcroft, *A Supplement to Burnet's History of My Own Time* (Oxford, 1902). Edward Carpenter, *Thomas Tenison* (London, 1948) and A. Tindal Hart, *William Lloyd* (London, 1952) are fine biogra-

phies, which unlike Cope's *Joseph Glanvill* stress ecclesiastical and political rather than intellectual history. There has been no biography of Stillingfleet since that of Richard Bentley, his chaplain, published in *The Works of that Eminent and most Learned Prelate, Dr. Edward Stillingfleet* (6 vols., London, 1710), I. But as with the other Latitudinarians, the article on him in the *Dictionary of National Biography* is excellent. Patrick's *Autobiography* may be found in his *Works*, IX, 407–569. Wilkins, like Stillingfleet, has not yet had sufficient justice done to him. P. A. Wright Henderson, *Life and Times of John Wilkins* (Edinburgh and London, 1910) "makes no pretensions to learning or research." Dorothy Stimson, "Dr. Wilkins and the Royal Society," *Journal of Modern History*, III (1931), 539–63, and J. G. Crowther, *Founders of British Science* (London, 1960), pp. 16–51, may be consulted for Wilkins's connections with seventeenth-century science. Richard S. Westfall, *Science and Religion in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven, 1958) is by far the best treatment of that subject, and contains much information on Wilkins and Glanvill as Christian *virtuosi*.

Books which are useful in placing the Latitudinarians in contemporary political and ecclesiastical contexts are Edward Carpenter, *The Protestant Bishop, A Life of Compton* (London, 1956), A. Tindal Hart, *The Life and Times of John Sharp, Archbishop of York* (London, 1949), and G. V. Bennett, *White Kennett* (London, 1957). The best survey of the English Church as a whole during the period is Sykes, *From Sheldon to Secker*. In respect of the chief ecclesiastical issue raised by the Glorious Revolution, J. W. C. Wand, *The High Church Schism* (London, 1960), L. M. Hawkins, *Allegiance in Church and State* (London, 1928), J. H. Overton, *The Nonjurors* (London, 1902), and Thomas Lathbury, *A History of the Nonjurors* (London, 1845) ought to be consulted. George Every, *The High Church Party* (London, 1956) is an invaluable discussion of the "Altitudinarians," and has an excellent chapter on the proceedings and recommendations of the Ecclesiastical Commission of 1689. The complete proceedings of the Commission may be found in *Parliamentary Paper 283* (1854). It is the contention of F. G. James, "The Bishops in Politics, 1688–1714," in W. A. Aiken and B. D. Henning, eds., *Conflict in Stuart England: Essays in honour of Wallace Notestein* (New York and London, 1960), pp. 229–57, that had it not been for the Low Church Latitudinarians "the Revolution of 1688 might not have been successful; it almost certainly would not have been bloodless."

For background in religious and intellectual history see Basil Willey, *The Seventeenth-Century Background* (London, 1934), the chief purpose of which is to show how changing conceptions of "truth" affected religion and literature; Paul Hazard, *The European Mind* (New Haven, 1954); and Franklin L. Baumer, *Religion and the Rise of Scepticism* (New York, 1960),

especially pp. 78–128 on the seventeenth century. S. L. Bethell, *The Cultural Revolution of the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1951) discusses changing conceptions of "reason" and "faith," mentioning Tillotson and Stillingfleet as examples of the change which overtook those concepts at about 1660. The discussion is suggestive but in my opinion not completely successful; and if Bethell had read Chillingworth he would have dated the change earlier. The essays by P. E. More and F. L. Cross, "The Spirit of Anglicanism" and "Anglicanism in the Seventeenth Century" in their anthology, *Anglicanism* (London, 1957), are useful. For diligence and thoroughness, John Hunt, *Religious Thought in England from the Reformation to the End of the last Century* (3 vols., London, 1870–73) is still unsurpassed, though it is difficult to find any organizational principle in the work. Louis I. Bredvold, *The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden* (Ann Arbor, 1934) has a chapter on the English *machine de guerre*; the French background of that phenomenon is the subject of R. H. Popkin's article, "Scepticism and the Counter-Reformation in France," *Archiv fur Reformationsgeschichte*, LI (1960), 58–86. Theodore Waldman, "Origins of the Legal Doctrine of Reasonable Doubt," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XX (1959), 299–316, shows how Chillingworth's and the Latitudinarians' notion of moral certainty affected Anglo-American jurisprudence. A. C. McGiffert, *Protestant Thought before Kant* (London, 1911) discusses Tillotson, Locke and Clarke as "supernatural rationalists." The discussion is useful, so long as one remembers that using approximately the same method, Tillotson remained orthodox, while Locke and Clarke did not. H. J. McLachlan, *Socinianism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1951), and R. N. Stromberg, *Religious Liberalism in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1954), which contains some material on the previous century, may also be consulted. E. E. Worcester, *The Religious Opinions of John Locke* (Geneva, N. Y., 1889) is an unusually fine study.

On previous developments in liberal religion see especially W. K. Jordan, *The Development of Religious Toleration in England* (4 vols., London, 1932–39), which covers the period from the reign of Elizabeth I to the Restoration, and has good sections on Great Tew and the Cambridge Platonists. See also Joseph Lecler, *Toleration and the Reformation* (2 vols., London and New York, 1960), and the Introduction to Roland H. Bainton's translation of Castellio, *Concerning Heretics* (New York, 1935), pp. 3–121. The best books on the thought of Great Tew are Kurt Weber, *Lucius Cary, Second Viscount Falkland* (New York, 1940), and the first volume of John Tulloch, *Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century* (Edinburgh and London, 1872). The best introduction to Cambridge Platonism is Chapter III of Cragg's *From Puritanism to the Age of Reason*; the best extended treatment is still that of Tulloch's second vol-

ume. Ernst Cassirer, *The Platonic Renaissance in England* (Austin, 1953), traces the intellectual origins of Cambridge Platonism through the Erasmian Humanism of sixteenth-century Oxford to the neo-Platonism of the Florentine Academy. Other useful studies are: J. J. De Boer, *The Theory of Knowledge of the Cambridge Platonists* (Madras, 1931); E. M. Austin, *The Ethics of the Cambridge Platonists* (Philadelphia, 1935); F. J. Powicke, *The Cambridge Platonists* (London, 1926); and Rosalie L. Colie, *Light and Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 1957), which describes the connections between the Platonists and the Dutch Arminians. J. A. Passmore, *Ralph Cudworth: An Interpretation* (Cambridge, 1951) is a solid piece of work.

On prose style, see R. F. Jones, "Science and English Prose Style in the Third Quarter of the Seventeenth Century" and "The Attack on Pulpit Eloquence in the Restoration: An Episode in the Development of the Neo-Classical Standard of Prose," in R. F. Jones and others, *The Seventeenth Century: Studies in the History of English Thought and Literature from Bacon to Pope* (Stanford, 1951), pp. 41–75, and pp. 111–43. W. Fraser Mitchell, *English Pulpit Oratory from Andrewes to Tillotson* (London, 1932) contains specific mention of the Latitudinarians, and is the fruit of a monumental amount of reading of seventeenth-century sermons. Of interest because of the pen from which it comes is the appreciation of Tillotson's prose style in W. Somerset Maugham, *Points of View* (New York, 1959), pp. 114–63.

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